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NGC
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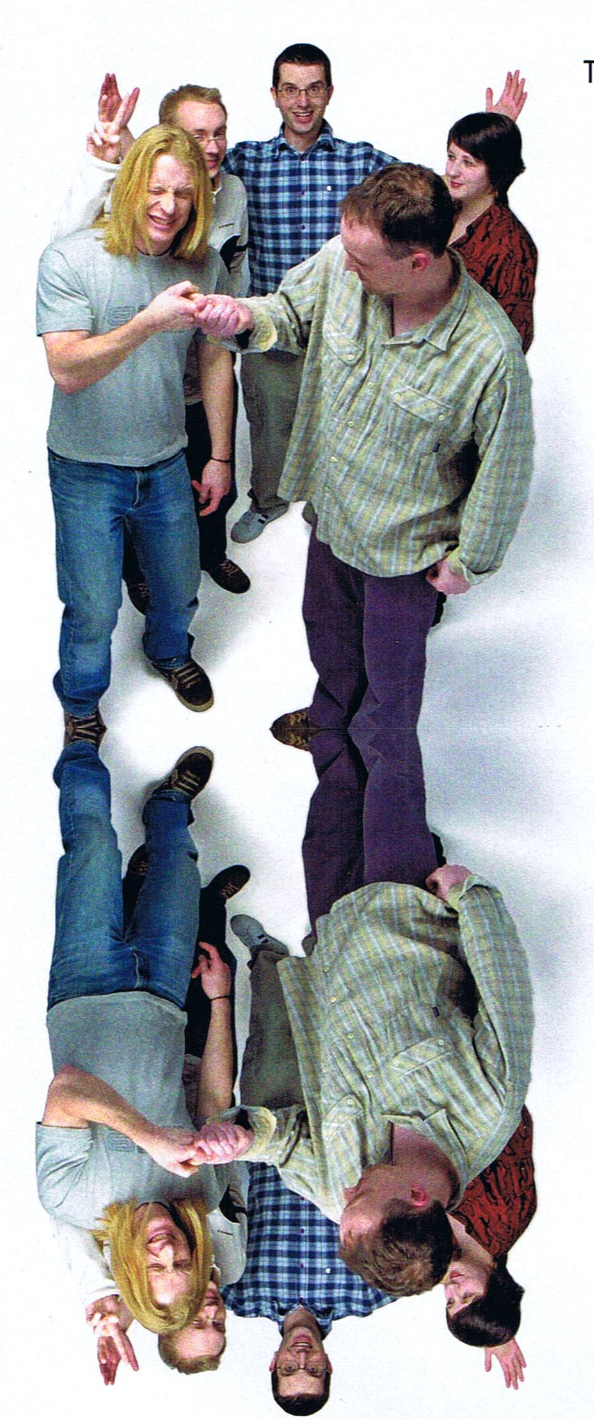
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MAKE IT A DOUBLE…

So there it is. Nintendo confirm what their next great invention is. And the 'mystery product' isn't the motion-sensing TV toy some were predicting. The Nintendo DS (temporary name, of course…) – the 'unique entertainment experience for the 21st Century' – will be fully revealed at this year's E3 videogame trade show (LA, 11th-14th May). But you don't have to wait till then – we've already smeared Geraint in lard and rammed him down Nintendo HQ's air ducts in order to snatch the very first images of the system. Honest. No doubt you've already turned to p8.

We can already hear the cynics, though. "Is that it? Twice the screen, half the battery life? Looks like they've got another Virtual Boy…" What a load of cobblers. On the surface it might seem a case of evolution rather than revolution, and that'll disappoint some. But until said cynics play the Nintendo DS (temporary name) and find out how it does things differently, they should keep an open mind.

We have absolute confidence in Nintendo's ability to produce a piece of kit that isn't merely going to provide another platform for third-party publishers to ply with stat-fuelled franchises and major movie licences, but rather something that truly has to be driven by the imagination and creativity of developers. As Shigeru Miyamoto says in our exclusive interview this issue, when Nintendo have a good idea, they can take advantage of it through a combination of games *and* hardware. "If we don't take risks, we can't innovate and create new forms of entertainment."

A dual-screen portable system might not seem the biggest risk in the world (after all, Nintendo's Game & Watch Multi Screen systems proved hugely popular 22 years ago…), but we've all yet to see the 'innovative advance in game interaction' that we're promised from Nintendo DS (temporary name). A far bigger risk is aiming for worldwide launch by the end of the year. Shyeah, right. We'll believe *that* when we see it. With both our eyes.

Team NGC
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TURN TO PAGE 8
To get the **NGC** verdict on this month's main event…

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WHY WE'RE No.1 FOR NINTENDO

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■ As the N64 became the choice of real game fans, Super Play made way for the mighty N64 Magazine.

■ From issue 60, N64 transformed into **NGC** – the ultimate hit for true Nintendo fans!

NGC'S FIVE STAR GUIDE TO WHAT'S UNMISSABLE THIS ISSUE!



1 PAGE 8

DOUBLE VISION

REVEALED Nintendo's next hardware innovation!

2 PAGE 58

FINAL FANTASY

Crystal Chronicles begins a multiplayer page in the epic series' history. Get your friends in and take a look.

MEET ENJiKi

A double vision in herself, Enjiki introduces the sections of the magazine. And she takes care of us. She mops up the gore when Martin has a bad day, consoles Ger when Swansea FC lose, helps Marcus paste piccies of Charlotte Uhlenbroek in his scrapbook and swaps makeup tips with Mim. ("Try a paper bag on your head…") However, she draws the line at "checking the suspension" in Paul's van.

PAGE 8

DOUBLE VISION

MORE SCREENS GOOD OR TWO SCREENS BAD? MEET DS…

WHAT'S IN NGC?

It's the start of the year so things are slow on the first look front – but new releases are pouring out.

PREVIEWS
Nearly here… but you'll have to wait a tiny bit longer.

NEWS
In-depth news, not pointless rumours.

EXTENDED PLAY
Squeezing all the fun from the gaming toothpaste tube.

REVIEWS
Who needs money? Exchange it for some of these…

Artist's impression. If by 'Artist', you mean, 'hastily cobbled together by the useless, good-for-nothing, long-haired bum they call Paul'

DOUBLE VISION?

Two screens are better than one? We take a detailed look at Nintendo's handheld bombshell.

"It will enable fun and movement not seen before… It has to be some kind of motion-sensing toy – a collection of knee and elbow pads (along with matching helmet and Power Glove-like peripherals) that allows you to interact with games like never before. Yeah, that's it…"

Just one of the many idiotic ideas that were bandied around the office as we deliberated over what, exactly, Nintendo's New Game Product was going to be. We wouldn't have guessed at the truth in a million years – and while the big question has finally been answered, there are hundreds more that won't be until we see the device at E3 in May.

In response to the multitude of rumours that are flying around, we've decided to sort out the good from the bad, differentiate fact from fiction and put our brains together to try to figure out just what kind of gaming innovation the Nintendo DS will offer us…

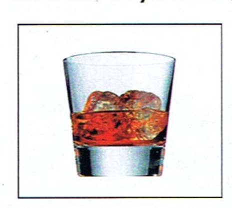
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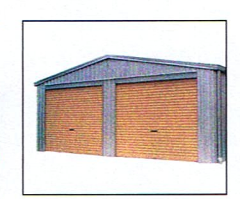


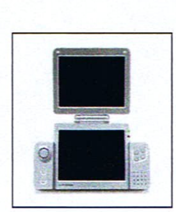


DOUBLES ANYONE?

Double says 'skill', 'luxury' and 'loaded'. No, it does...







TURN OVER

To see the sort of gaming innovations DS could usher in, all in glorious rumourvision!

NINTENDO DS

THE FACTS

- It is not the successor to either GBA or Gamecube.
- It's a unique, standalone product that will act as a 'third pillar' to Gamecube and GBA.
- Revolutionary 'Dual Screen' feature.
- The three-inch screens will be back-lit (unlike the SP's front-lit screens) and will be situated one above the other. The unit will use a rechargable battery like the SP.
- Will boast simple, intuitive controls. The control scheme has already been finalised.
- It will have two separate processors. The processors are being made by ARM, the same company responsible for the GBA processor. The primary processor will be based on the ARM9 architecture – the speed of which clocks in around 200MHz. The second processor will be based on the ARM7, capable of speeds of around 85MHz. In comparison, GBA's runs at 16.8 MHz
- Games will be available on a solid-state format – but not cartridges. Instead, they will come on thin memory cards, a little like mobile phone sim cards.
- While Nintendo already have a working unit, the actual exterior design has yet to be finalised.
- First-party software development is already underway, with Miyamoto himself already involved in a couple of titles.
- Nintendo are gunning for a simultaneous worldwide release by the end of 2004.

NINTENDO DS

THE RUMOURS

"The unit will be come in a clam-shell design like the GBA SP"
With two screens, you'd imagine that Nintendo would want to ensure that they are as protected as possible. The ability to fold in two would offer quick and easy protection to both screens, while also making the device half the size for easy portability. However, Nintendo are adamant that this will be a completely different kind of machine to GBA, so it's perfectly likely that DS will look completely different to Game Boy. In which case it's possible that both screens will appear on some kind of flat tablet-like design.

LIKELIHOOD: 5/10

"Iwata said that the unit will 'enable fun and movement not seen before'. Could the motion-sensing chip that we saw previously in 'Kirby's Tilt and Tumble' come into play here?"
Nintendo have been experimenting with the idea for some time. Remember the Gamecube-GBA compatible 'Kirby'? That game used two screens as one of its core ideas, with Kirby falling and jumping from one screen to the next. We wouldn't put it past Nintendo to keep the best ideas from that and utilise them on DS in some way. It's also worth remembering that way back in September 2001 Nintendo invested in Gyration Inc, a company specialising in motion sensing and wireless technology.

LIKELIHOOD: 6/10

"DS will be a multi-media, multi-functional device of some sort"
Doubt it. Iwata himself has frequently voiced his opinion about the convergence of technology, saying that it isn't a particularly good idea. Moreover, a device that allows video and mp3 playback will ramp up the cost of the device significantly – something that Nintendo will want to avoid. We can't see DS being used for anything other than gaming.

LIKELIHOOD: 1/10

"DS will be a single-player unit"
Nintendo have always been great believers in multiplayer gaming. Ever since N64, four-player gaming has always been a standard feature of their consoles, and let's face it, the most fun you can have with your Gamecube, involves getting three friends round to join in the action. This is one aspect of gaming that Nintendo won't want to abandon in a hurry. The possibility of two players being able to use the same machine is something we'd personally like to see. It worked well on a basic level with 'Wario Ware' – and the option for each player to use a separate screen will doubtless be an idea that Nintendo have already explored.

LIKELIHOOD: 1/10

"DS will incorporate wireless technology"
This is one of the strongest rumours going around right now. With the Wavebird already proving to be a must-have peripheral, and with a wireless GBA link already on its way, we wouldn't be surprised if some kind of wireless link-up will come as standard in DS. In fact, Nintendo are already making noises about a wireless LAN feature...

LIKELIHOOD: 7/10

"It's just a gimmick – it won't get any third-party support"
Early indications show that some third parties are positive about the platform. Both Namco and Konami – key Japanese developers – have already pledged their support. Talking to a Japanese newspaper, a Namco spokesman said that "we [Namco] are not at the development stage yet, but we intend to support Nintendo DS."
EA are also said to be interested and are currently evaluating the system. However, the vast majority of developers were as surprised by the announcement of DS as everyone else, and with many already working on PSP games, we wonder just how many developers will be willing to contend with an extra platform.

LIKELIHOOD: 5/10

"The two screens will combine to create some kind of 3D image"
By far the most ludicrous rumour we've heard so far, and the only reason we can imagine this idea came about was through some perverted individuals' desire to have the Virtual Boy dragged into the 21st century. We have, however, heard that both screens can be used together simultaneously to create one giant screen. Although this is perfectly likely, we're still a little sceptical. We've yet to hear exactly what each processor controls, and if one of them has to handle all the graphics, the technology might not stretch to meet the graphical demands.

LIKELIHOOD: 0/10



THE GAMES

Lets face it, the example of DS software in action that Nintendo gave at the official announcement was… well… total rubbish. Surely they could have come up with something more enticing than just a game of footie viewed from different perspectives – you know, something like…



GO! GO! ASDA SECURITY GUARD

SCREEN 1: This is where your security guard patrols. Guide your Guardian of Groceries around the shop floor (*MGS*-style), keeping your distance so as not to startle people. Then, when the time is right, close in on a shoplifter, give chase and rugby tackle the perpetrator in the car park outside. If the individual you manhandle is innocent – you're fired.

SCREEN 2: Shows CCTV footage from different parts of the store. Use the analogue stick to track dodgy looking individuals as they try to stuff whole salmon and packs of butternut squash into the lining of their trenchcoats. Use the information from this screen to help your guard.





OPERATION: THE NEXT GENERATION

SCREEN 1: Third-person view of a gap-year student, exposing himself to all kinds of nasty diseases and environmental hazards as he journeys around the world. Watch in terror as he's attacked by mosquitoes, unfriendly locals and burns himself out after picking aubergines for 12 hours straight on a farm in the outback.

SCREEN 2: Like a digital Dennis Quaid, it's up to you to zoom around his arteries, colon and all his major organs putting right what malnutrition and excessive alcohol consumption has done wrong. Watch the top screen for any signs of danger and fly down his veins to administer the correct dose of medicine.





LEGEND OF ZELDA: TINGLE'S REVENGE

SCREEN 1: Shows Link on another adventure through Hyrule in an attempt to thwart Ganondorf. Link can not be directly controlled. Instead, players can change camera angles in order to get as a good a view as possible of the world around him. Use this screen to follow the story and predict where he'll go and what he's most likely to do next…

SCREEN 2: Take control of Tingle and do your utmost to mess up Link's plans. Booby-trap those dungeon doors, smash those life-giving pots before he gets to them, dope Epona with poison fairies and lead him down a merry path of destruction – all for Tingle's financial gain.





VOLVO DRIVER: X-TREME

SCREEN 1: *Crazy Taxi*-style driving game, where you have to get from point A to point B in the fastest time possible with the highest score possible. Points are awarded for how badly you drive without getting pulled over. Offend fellow motorists by cutting them up, driving up their back bumper, undertaking, failing to indicate in appropriate places, splashing pedestrians and running red lights. After all, you're safe in your tin box.

SCREEN 2: Keep your eyes on this handy GPS road monitor. It'll give you the heads up on speed cameras, police car locations and areas where pedestrians are waiting to cross. Take advantage of this information on the fly by causing chaos and evading the long arm of the law.





SUPER 'LET'S GO TO WAR' DS

SCREEN 1: As the leader of a world superpower you have to guide yourself through a point-and-click adventure around a government building, rallying support for your party in a potential conflict against an axis of evil. However, you need support from…

SCREEN 2: A leader of a former world power, you have to hold up your half of the bargain by embarking on a secondary point-and-click adventure, where you rally support from your party, generating spin to win over the populace of your country and journey half way across the world to spread the word of war. Gamers play both adventures simultaneously, co-ordinating events across both screens so that both leaders are war-ready by the end of the game.



DID YOU KNOW? We'd rather play a game combining Sonic and Kirby than one starring Tingle. Unless we could kill him.

NINTENDO DS

NGC SAYS...

Nintendo are masters of the unexpected, which makes our DS mock-up and childish attempts to think up dual-screened games a somewhat futile exercise. Trying to second guess the kind of software we'll be playing on DS is very difficult. Still, with a potentially radical piece of hardware like DS, you have to believe that Nintendo have something clever and innovative up their sleeves. Past experiences don't bode too well, though. If you take the Gamecube-GBA link as a single piece of hardware, Nintendo already have dual-screen system available and, with the exception of a few titles, it's produced nothing more than curiosities – non-essential map-screens and gameplay elements that do nowhere near as much to 'enhance gameplay' as Nintendo would have us believe. And of course there's the little matter of the Virtual Boy – a dual-screened 'new experience' that burnt Nintendo's fingers (not to mention our eye-sockets) ten years back.

But of course, DS will be completely different from anything out there right now. This isn't GBA2. It not even PSP's nemesis (although we'll readily admit we're a little suspicious of this). It's supposed to be a completely unique product – but that's not to say it won't have challengers.

> "DS WILL BE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM ANYTHING OUT THERE"

Our primary concern is the flow of software for the system. Do third-party developers really want to take the risk of developing for yet another platform? They've already got the current three home consoles, plus GBA, PSP and now DS – that makes six different machines fighting over the public's affection. Even if developers do jump on board, just how many of those will be able to take full advantage of the technology? The worry here is that games will end up being nothing more than RPGs with real-time map screens or (shudder) football games with one screen showing enlarged views of the ongoing action. For DS to truly be successful, games developers are really going have to work very hard to carve out the machine's niche in the market – and we reckon that, at least initially, Nintendo themselves are going to have to do the bulk of that hard work and create some truly great first-party software.

Nintendo, as always, are quietly confident. In a recent interview, Iwata claimed that he'd be happy if only 10% of people understood DS, and happy to rely on word of mouth to drive enthusiasm for the system. In fairness, you have to admire the way in which Nintendo have gone about releasing information about DS. Bits of tantalising information have been drip-fed to the public over a few weeks, followed by a bombshell that has had rumours flying around left right and centre. Minimum effort on Nintendo's part, then, but it's ensured that news about DS is a valuable enough commodity to get delirious gamers foaming at the mouth at every new morsel of information.

> "IWATA CLAIMED THAT HE'D BE HAPPY IF ONLY 10% OF PEOPLE UNDERSTOOD DS"

How Nintendo take things from here remains to be seen. We'd love to see playable units at E3 – not least because it will steal some of the thunder from PSP's debut. However, early indications from our contact with Nintendo suggest that DS may not be playable by May, in which case they need something special to demonstrate that'll whip everyone into a frenzy. The fact that right now Miyamoto is working on two titles that he's not saying anything about should go some way towards drumming up a bit of enthusiasm. Wireless LAN and motion-sensing gameplay will surely open people's eyes and capture hearts, should Nintendo decide to include them as features. But as Nintendo themselves put it, they're not expecting everyone to 'go wild' at its unveiling. Maybe it's not quite as important to them as it is to their fans. It's not GC or 'GBA2', remember. Maybe it's just meant to be a bit of fun.



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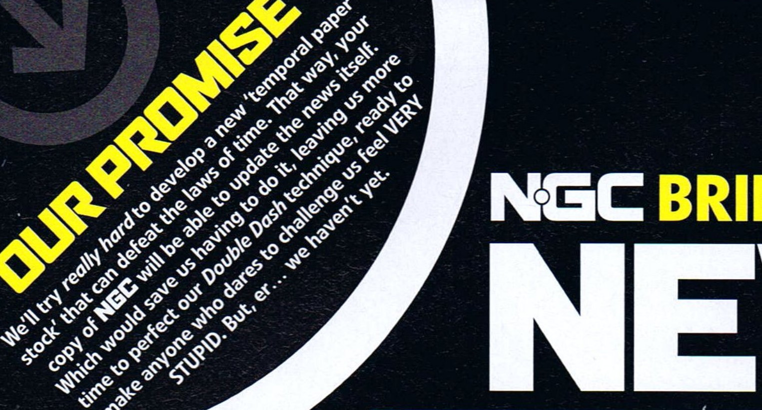
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RUMBLED!

COULD NINTENDO'S PATENT VICTORY FORCE RIVALS TO PAY FOR FORCE FEEDBACK PADS?



Nintendo scored a potentially massive coup in January, with the US patent office's recognition that the company invented the rumble technology featured in all current console controllers.

Two key patents were granted, covering N64's original Rumble Pak accessory. The patents, filed in 1996 and revised in 1999, have been updated to include any type of videogame device which provides vibration feedback in response to specific on-screen events. Obviously this description fits not only the Gamecube controller but also the vibrating controllers for Xbox and PlayStation 2.

> **"NINTENDO HOLDS PATENTS FOR A WIDE RANGE OF INNOVATIONS"**

Nintendo holds patents for a wide range of gaming innovations, some of which have been vigorously enforced. For example, you won't find any other manufacturers using Nintendo's patented D-pad design or octagonal guide ring for the analogue stick.

Other patents, such as a system for making 3D cameras avoid obstacles (*Mario 64's* Lakitu Cam), have proved impossible to police. If that one had been enforceable, most other 3D platformers wouldn't exist.

Software patents are difficult to prove, whereas hardware patents can be virtually watertight. The patents for the rumble technology include both elements, with a slight leaning towards the hardware side of things.

While pursuing this through the courts may lead to an uncertain outcome, it has not escaped our attention that Nintendo has also been granted the patent on mapping faces onto in-game characters – a feature recently used in the PS2 version of *Tony Hawk's Underground*.

Still, with so many blatant infringements taking place, a Nintendo insider revealed to us that Satoru Iwata and Sony's Ken Kutaragi would settle the dispute with a 'thumb war' standoff at a neutral venue in Tokyo. Miyamoto and Kojima will be present to adjudicate, and will no doubt have been quick to notice the worrying omission of the classic 'no biting, no eye gouging' rule. (*Are you sure about that last bit?* – ed.)



SEGA DEVELOP FOR DS
Just as we went to deadline, Sega announced that they have been in possession of DS Dev kits for the best part of the year and intend to fully support the system. Although no more details than that were given, it's reassuring to know that one of Japan's biggest companies is taking the platform seriously.



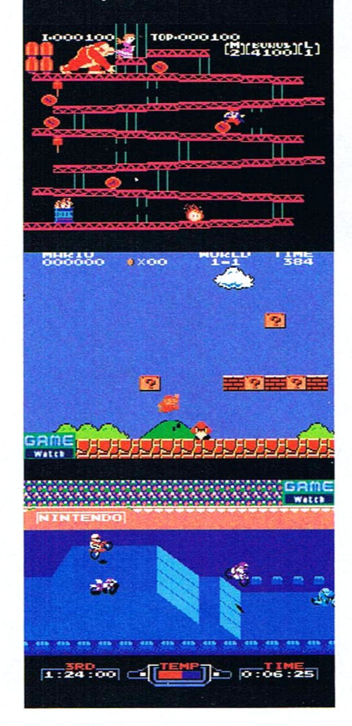
NES CLASSICS ON YOUR GBA

Nintendo have recently released a new series of titles for the GBA called Famicom Mini in Japan.

So far, ten Nintendo, Namco and Hudson games are available: ***Bomberman, Xevious, Mappy, Star Soldier, Ice Climbers, Pac-Man, Excitebike, Donkey Kong, Legend of Zelda*** and ***Super Mario Bros***, all of which are straight ports of their original NES games.

The games are cheaper than normal GBA carts (about a tenner each) and are perfect for anyone who's never sampled the originals. Apart from ***Zelda***, none of the games are particularly text-heavy, making them excellent import fodder.

As yet, sadly, there's no word about a US or European release.







▲ It certainly looks the part – but we can't tell you just *how* nice it really is...



▲ ...because Capcom will hurt us.

RE-LEASE ME!

CAPCOM SCREW THE SILENCER ON RESI DETAILS

Last month we promised information on *Killer 7* and *Resident Evil 4*. We really meant it too – so it's with frustration that we find ourselves in the position of not being able to say anything at all.

While *Resident Evil 4* was playable at a Las Vegas event, we had to sign an NDA (Non-Disclosure Agreement) that forbids us to tell you any details about what we saw. The same applies to what we learned about *Killer 7* which, although it was only shown in video form, has really whetted our appetites for the game.

So what can we say? Well, not much more than the bunch of suggestive words that Capcom have already released. Those being,"Your worst fears... the inevitable destruction of society... trust your inner senses... you've never seen *Resident Evil* like this before..."

In reference to that last bit, *RE4* really is a departure from its predecessors. Fully 3D environments are just the icing on the cake in a game that is unlike anything you're expecting. It's without a doubt *the* most important game set for Gamecube right now. Both *Killer 7* and *Resident Evil 4* are due in Europe in 2004. Maybe.

"IT'S A RESIDENT EVIL GAME THAT IS UNLIKE ANYTHING YOU'RE GOING TO EXPECT"

As for the the rest of the event, well, Capcom are apparently striving to be much more aggressive in 2004 – looking to account for 10% of the software market across all three territories. This they intend to achieve by concentrating on the three key franchises of *Mega Man, Resident Evil* and *Onimusha* and making them universally appealing around the world.

What does this mean for us? Well, there's *Resident Evil* to start with and then, um, after that... eh... well um... there's another installment of *Mega Man Battle Network* for the GBA. That's *reeeeaaal* nice, Capcom.

EA STRIKE GOLD

As if they didn't have enough money already...



Love them or hate them, EA are set to bring some top-quality titles to Gamecube in 2004 – in particular the newly acquired triple whammy of Free Radical Design's *Timesplitters 3*, Criterion's *Burnout 3* and now Namco's *R. Racing Evolution*.

Burnout, in particular, is especially good news for us as, under the control of publishers Acclaim, it was looking increasingly likely that it wouldn't appear on Gamecube – remember, Acclaim have withdrawn their support for the machine. Now, with EA at the helm, there's a much better chance of the title being released for Gamecube.

The *really* big one out of all those is *Timesplitters 3*, of course. Free Radical Design have already confirmed that they are busy working on the title, which will include improved gameplay features and a completely reworked graphics engine. Even if it improves just a little over *TS2* then we're going to be all over it like a rash.

As for *R: Racing Evolution*, it seems EA are going to bundle *Pac-Man Vs* with it after all. Which is a shame really, because if you want it, you're going to have to fork out the readies for a pretty mediocre racer. Maybe it's about time a certain company put copies up on their Stars Shatalogue? Just a thought.



▲ ***Burnout 3*** **is already looking the business – but will it be out on GC?**

SHORT CUTS

WEAR ELASTIC COMPRESSION STOCKINGS TO IMPROVE CIRCULATION

You know, like those tights you get made to wear when you're in hospital. Doing so will increase your chances of not *dying*. Fact. Alternatively, you can just make sure you don't kneel in the same position for hours and hours on end. Fourteen-year-old Dominic Patrick from Liverpool did just that and ended up going to hospital with DVT (Deep Vein Thrombosis), a condition that occurs when blood moves too slowly through your veins and it clots. Now, not only is it a real pain in the backside having to sit in a hospital for hours on end, but DVT is pretty nasty. Imagine that a part of the aforementioned clot broke off, travelled up your body and into your lung – well, you'd suffer some horrible breathing difficulties and, if you were extremely unlucky, you'd get a pulmonary embolism that could wind up making you *dead*. So we suggest you do yourself a favour and make sure you take a break from your telly from time to time (once every hour should do it) and move about a bit. Get the old blood flowing. Here endeth the safety lesson.

EA POUNCE ON CATWOMAN Electronic Arts have secured the license for the forthcoming Catwoman movie starring Halle Berry. Argonaut, whose previous titles include the original Starfox on SNES, will take up development duties.

DONKEY KONGA UPDATE In the tradition of Namco's Taiko No Tetsujin, which has seen plenty of updates, Donkey Konga is set to get a whole new disc of tunes to drum along to. We don't have a track listing to hand, but it's certainly good to know that Namco will continue to support the title.

IS THIS THE WORST VIDEOGAME IDEA EVER?!

HAVE EA FINALLY LOST THE PLOT WITH THIS, THE MOST SICKENING OF GAME CONCEPTS?

Listen to this. EA and Marvel have entered into an agreement. An agreement that will see EA develop a new fighting game that will pit Marvel's super heroes against an original cast of EA 'heroes'.

Little is known about what form the game will take – we haven't been told if it'll be a 2D affair like *Marvel vs Capcom* (unlikely), a *Smash Bros* style battler or a more traditional one-on-one *Soul Calibur* scrapper. This isn't the point, however. The success of 'vs games' or character-driven fighters relies heavily on them having characters that are already well-loved and long established. Now obviously Marvel are going to have little trouble here, with their rich history of comic book heroes and villains to draw from. EA on the other hand have… er… have… um… they've got Ty the Tasmanian Tiger.

But of course EA are going to develop a whole new cast of characters. Original heroes that Marvel have agreed to create comics and for as well as a whole host of other media.

So the question is this, can EA create characters that will be loved the world over? Even Todd McFarlane failed abysmally with the *horrible* Necrid in *Soul Calibur 2* and he's well versed in the art of character creation. We wait with bated breath to see if EA can do better…



SHORT CUTS



NAMCO DELIVER

We've been hoping this would happen for ages, so it's great to finally have some confirmation. Namco have finally announced that they are to release both of their highly acclaimed RPGs *Baten Kaitos* and *Tales of Symphonia*. Unfortunately though, we're going to have to wait a little until early next year to play them, as the translation of each game has only just begun.

WILLY WAVING: THE NINTENDO WAY

It's that 'mine's bigger than yours' time again, with Nintendo announcing that they've dethroned Microsoft's Xbox from the number two spot in terms of global sales. Gamecube has sold 14 million units worldwide now, and around five million of those have come in the last ten months. Microsoft are still adamant that they reign supreme in both the US and Europe. You'd think that somebody would slap the pair of them into giving us some proper sales figures and sort out this childish bickering once and for all.

NEW TOYS UNLEASHED

Mums feel the pressure with a lorry load of collectables.

Bandai are set to unleash a brand-new range of Pokémon toys and collectables for spring 2004. Under the banner of Pokémon Advance the range will include Pokémon from the latest GBA adventures, *Pokémon Ruby* and *Sapphire*, and include the usual assortment of plush toys and collectable figure sets. Best of all, though, are the rather impressive Pokémon Curling Figures (which let you launch plastic Pokémon from some kind of miniature plastic cannon) and, even better, a series of action figures that can be used in conjunction with a 'Interactive Pokéball', a device that you can use to train your individual figures. When you've prepared your figure you can hook up two Interactive Pokéballs and battle it out against a mate. To spice up the action you can use special data cards that come with the figures to give your chosen Pokémon a new repertoire of moves. Win the battle and you get to keep your mate's Pokémon. There are 100 Pokémon in all to win and train.

Courtesy of Bandai and Morello Brand Publicists, we've got 10 gift sets to give away. Each gift set contains an assortment of the toys from the Pokémon Advanced range. All you have to do to win one of them for yourself is to answer the following question:

Breloom is an evolution of which Pokémon?

a) Wurmple
b) Shroomish
c) Zigagoon

Answers to ***'Eat my Nosepass'*** at the usual address by no later than the 1st of April please.

THIS MONTH IN NGC…
Kittsy, who recently had his 'chimney swept' has started going out at night to collect firewood. Apparently he found some choice cuts but had to discard some because they were 'too wet' and another one 'had woodworm' in it. In other news Pauls's Go-Kart team 'Team PAAARP' came fourth (third loser to you and me) in the Thruxton Winter Championship. Oh and Mim fried an egg that 'looked like Elvis when it was flipped sunny side up'. Now that's what we call rock and roll…



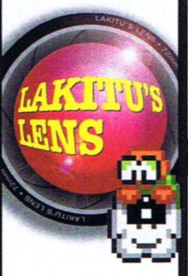
CRYSTAL LINK

Nintendo ease you into the most expensive game the world has seen.

Much like with the *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles* release in Japan, Nintendo of Europe are going to be bundling the game with a free link cable, helping any GBA owners out there get started, without having to shell out an additional 15 quid for the pleasure of playing the game as it's supposed to be played.

Unfortunately, you don't get three friends bundled with it, and neither do you get a spare £285 to kit them out with GBAs and link cables. Not to mention the fee needed to get a physio in to massage your crippled hands after using a GBA for five hours straight.

Ah well. At least it's a start.



Seen Mario showing off his prize parsnips on your regional news? Let us know by using 'words' and 'pictures'…



WRITE TO LAKITU'S LENS, NGC, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

This month, Derby's Graham Ayscough sent us the crime-solving old busybody from Murder She Wrote, holding a classic Game Boy up in court. Apparently it was used to control military satellites …

Entries sent with picture evidence will win a GC game

N5 DELAYED?

SCOTCHING RUMOURS THAT NINTENDO WILL PUSH BACK N5 IN FAVOUR OF GC PERIPHERALS…



A Nikkei news report in Japan stated that Nintendo were going to delay development of N5, instead concentrating on a number of unique peripherals for Gamecube. We contacted Nintendo about the reports and they had this to say…

"Contrary to what has been reported in one Japanese publication, Nintendo is staying in the console business and still plans to launch our next home console in the same timeframe as our competitors. In addition, we are working on a number of complementary technical advances that we believe significantly enhance the gaming experience. We also continue to look for exciting ways to extend the value of the GCN, and will share those ideas with you in the coming months. Specific details about other accessories or systems and their functionalities haven't yet been made public. However, we will make further information about our next console available in the near future, and we look forward to further demonstrating our record of breakthrough innovation in video game play."



VIRTUAL REALITY 'GOSEN'

THIS MONTH The best of your Gosen robots. Every robot in this picture will get the points for ITB. The rest of the pitiful efforts we received won't. Why? Because they were utter, utter rubbish. Even more rubbish than these…

1. REX McGEE
The video of Gosen burning was good. Dangerous. And funny.

2. DOM STROUD
Was it too much to ask to have Gosen's face on it? A biro scribble is just plain lazy, you maggot.

3. DAVE PUGH
Dave, mate. Your robot was, quite frankly rubbish. Even the chainsaw.

4. STEVE BROOKS
Some kind of monster teddy… Sulley perhaps ? Nope, still crap.

5. IAN STEADMAN
'A plastic hand shaped like a duck' you say? That's our Gosen all right.



6. MATTHEW PELLETT
The boy needs help. No, really.

7. BRYAN DOCHERTY
Your stale sweets don't cut it round here sunshine…

8. DERMOT RYAN
His mastery of tin foil has to be seen to be believed.

9. EWAN McKENZIE
Less like Gosen. More like Kilroy.

10. MICHAEL ROTHWELL
Looking suspiciously like Kano.

11. MARTIJN HEULE
Not so much a robot. More of a silver slab. Rubbish really.

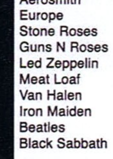


INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING

THE BEST RINGTONES LOGOS & JAVA GAMES

RINGTONES

Hits		Mono	Poly
Black Eyed Peas	Where Is The Love	NGM 45300	NGP 79667
Beyonce Knowles	Crazy In Love	NGM 45301	NGP 79237
Sean Paul	Get Busy	NGM 45302	NGP 79019
DJ Sammy & Yanou feat Do	Heaven	NGM 45303	NGP 76994
Evanescence	Bring Me To Life	NGM 45304	NGP 79119
Coldplay	Clocks	NGM 45305	NGP 78160
White Stripes	Seven Nation Army	NGM 45306	NGP 78921
Blu Cantrell	Breathe	NGM 45307	NGP 79290
Basement Jaxx	Lucky Star	NGM 45308	NGP 76922
Beyonce	Me,Myself+I	NGM 45309	NGP 76946
Kylie	Slow	NGM 45310	NGP 75079
Hip Hop			
Obie Trice	Got Some Teeth	NGM 45311	NGP 74137
R Kelly	Ignition	NGM 45312	NGP 79043
Jay Z+Pharrell	Excuse Me Miss	NGM 45313	NGP 79011
Busta+Mariah	I Know What You Want	NGM 45314	NGP 79117
DMX	Where the Hood at	NGM 45315	NGP 72774
50 Cent	PIMP	NGM 45316	NGP 70566
50 Cent	In Da Club	NGM 45317	NGP 77949
Eminem	Cleaning Out My Closet	NGM 45318	NGP 76327
Puff Daddy	Missing U	NGM 45319	NGP 77638
Eminem	Lose Yourself	NGM 45320	NGP 77915
50 Cent	21 Questions	NGM 45321	NGP 79236
Eminem	Without Me	NGM 45322	NGP 75782
DMX	X Gonna Give it to Ya	NGM 45323	NGP 79012
Rock			
The Darkness	I Believe In A Thing Called Love	NGM 45324	NGP 79744
ACDC	For Those About To Rock	NGM 45325	NGP 77763
Motorhead	Ace of Spades	NGM 45326	NGP 77103
Aerosmith	Walk This Way	NGM 45327	NGP 79066
Europe	Final Countdown	NGM 45328	NGP 75655
Stone Roses	Fools Gold	NGM 45329	NGP 70917
Guns N Roses	Sweet Child o Mine	NGM 45330	NGP 72161
Led Zeppelin	Kashmir	NGM 45331	NGP 79267
Meat Loaf	Bat Out of Hell	NGM 45332	NGP 70630
Van Halen	Jump	NGM 45333	NGP 75137
Iron Maiden	Rain Maker	NGM 45334	NGP 76948
Beatles	Hey Jude	NGM 45335	NGP 70022
Black Sabbath	Paranoid	NGM 45336	NGP 77099
Dance			
XTM	Fly on the Wings of Love	NGM 45337	NGP 79164
Bhangra Knights	Husan	NGM 45338	NGP 79039
UD Project	Summer Jam	NGM 45339	NGP 72358
Benni Bennassi	Satisfaction	NGM 45340	NGP 79255
Love Inc	You're A Superstar	NGM 45341	NGP 77432
Ganga Kru	Super Sharp Shooter	NGM 45342	NGP 72859
Jaimeson	Complete	NGM 45343	NGP 79746
Tomcraft	Loneliness	NGM 45344	NGP 78802
Ultrabeat	Pretty Green Eyes	NGM 45345	NGP 79790
Kylie	Can't Get You Out of my Head	NGM 45346	NGP 74005
TV			
Only Fools + Horses		NGM 45347	NGP 70117
Muppets Mahna Mahna		NGM 45348	NGP 78378
Miami Vice		NGM 45349	NGP 76079
Professionals		NGM 45350	NGP 70119
Starsky+Hutch		NGM 45351	NGP 76868
Minder		NGM 45352	NGP 70752
Danger Mouse		NGM 45353	NGP 76368
Steptoe+Son		NGM 45354	NGP 70582
Scooby Doo		NGM 45355	NGP 70123
Top Cat		NGM 45356	NGP 70380
Simpsons		NGM 45357	NGP 70441
A-Team		NGM 45358	NGP 76230

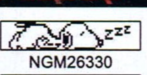
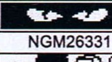


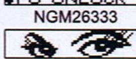
Movies	Mono	Poly
Great Escape	NGM 45362	NGP 70092
James Bond	NGM 45363	NGP 70340
Rocky	NGM 45364	NGP 70561
Godfather	NGM 45365	NGP 70291
Exorcist	NGM 45366	NGP 70284
Halloween	NGM 45367	NGP 75961
Bev Hills Cop	NGM 45368	NGP 77032
Ghostbusters	NGM 45369	NGP 70089
Deliverance	NGM 45370	NGP 70711
Matrix	NGM 45371	NGP 75713

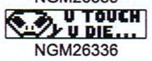
***** Items Below Only Available as Poly Tones (NOT GAMES)

Classic Game Tones	Poly
Super Mario World	NGP 78293
Super Mario Cart	NGP 77913
Street Fighter	NGP 78317
Sonic The Hedgehog	NGP 78233
Sim City	NGP 78298
Ridge Racer	NGP 77972
Desert Strike	NGP 77740
Donkey Kong Country	NGP 77751
Final Fantasy 7	NGP 77887
Mega Man X	NGP 77936
Batman Returns	NGP 77129
Castlevania 4	NGP 77509
Killer Instincts	NGP 78368
Zelda / A Link To The Past	NGP 77910
Tekken 2	NGP 78373

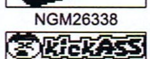
LOGOS

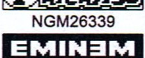

NGM26330

NGM26331
NGM26332

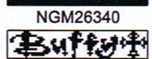

NGM26333

NGM26334

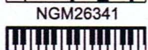
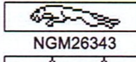
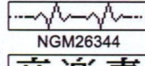

NGM26335


NGM26336


NGM26337
NGM26338


NGM26339


NGM26340


NGM26341

NGM26342
NGM26343

NGM26344


NGM26345


NGM26346
PH@T
NGM26347
open 24 hours
NGM26348
loading...
NGM26349

REAL SOUND TONES

Human Sounds	
Dentist Drilling	NGP 75249
Suction Tube (Dentist)	NGP 75257
Game Show	NGP 72970
Fanfair	NGP 72968
Your File Is Done Scary	NGP 72953
Burp	NGP 79879
Long Fart	NGP 79880
Sports Sounds	
Car Speeding Up (Car Racing)	NGP 79984
Goooal	NGP 79962
Hand Clap	NGP 79963
Ohhh ! (Near Miss)	NGP 79966
Owzat ! (Cricket)	NGP 79992
Animal Sounds	
Chimp	NGP 79170
Dolphin	NGP 79172
Cuckoo	NGP 79198
Elephant	NGP 79174
Frog	NGP 79199
Monkey	NGP 79181
Pig Snort	NGP 79184
Rooster	NGP 79185
Wasp	NGP 79207
Lion Growl	NGP 79180
Whale	NGP 79189

JAVA GAMES



Nightmare Creatures™

Category: Beat'em All

Time to face your worst nightmare!

Phone Model	Game Code
Nokia 3100	NGGG 8594
Nokia 3300	NGGG 8291
Nokia 6100	NGGG 1569
Nokia 6610	NGGG 8821
Nokia 6800	NGGG 3801
Nokia 7210	NGGG 6958
Nokia 7250	NGGG 4522
Nokia 3510i	NGGG 4050
Nokia 5100	NGGG 8332

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XIII

Category: Action / Shooter

Will you penetrate the mystery?

Phone Model	Game Code
Nokia 3100	NGGG 2431
Nokia 3300	NGGG 2112
Nokia 3510i	NGGG 2953
Nokia 3650	NGGG 2331
Nokia 5100	NGGG 3410
Nokia 6100	NGGG 4183
Nokia 6610	NGGG 8415
Nokia 7210	NGGG 4041
Nokia 7250	NGGG 9985
Nokia 7650	NGGG 3562
Nokia N-Gage	NGGG 4068
Sagem My V-65	NGGG 2948
Sharp GX-10	NGGG 6384
Sharp GX-20	NGGG 2009

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Planet Zero™

Category: Shoot

A handful of chaos!

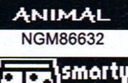
Phone Model	Game Code
Nokia 3100	NGGG 9330
Mokia 3300	NGGG 2820
Nokia 3410	NGGG 1394
Nokia 3510i	NGGG 8103
Nokia 3650	NGGG 7466
Nokia 5100	NGGG 1158
Nokia 6100	NGGG 8833
Nokia 6610	NGGG 1935
Nokia 6800	NGGG 5811
Nokia 7210	NGGG 6954
Nokia 7250	NGGG 4109
Nokia 7650	NGGG 8999
Nokia N-Gage	NGGG 9220
Sharp GX10	NGGG 8813
Siemans M50	NGGG 7337
Siemans M55	NGGG 1341
Siemans S55	NGGG 6296

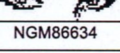
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PICTURE MESSAGES

9999999999 missed calls
NGM86630
NGM86631
PARTY ANIMAL
NGM86632
NGM86633

NGM86634

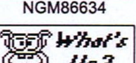

NGM86635


NGM86636
NGM86637


NGM86638

NGM86639

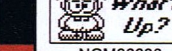

NGM86640

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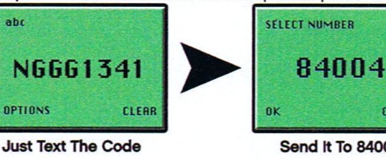




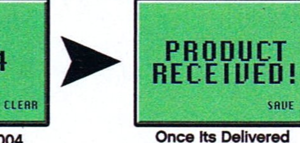
TO ORDER BY TEXT

(All products are available on selected phones please check Terms and conditions for compatibility)

NGGG1341
Just Text The Code



Send It To 84004



Once Its Delivered Save It To Your Phone

To order a mono tone or Java game text the item code to 84004 Eg. Text **NGGG 1341** to **84004**
To order a Real sound tone or Polyphonic tone text the item code followed by your phone manufacturer to 84004. Eg. TEXT **NGP 79170 NOKIA** to **84004**

DISAGREE WITH MOST WANTED? Then email us at **ngc@futurenet.co.uk** or write to us at **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW and tell us the three games you're most looking forward to. Every month, we'll tally up the scores on the doors and change the list accordingly.

MOST WANTED!

Adding up the scores and accounting for taste, that's what this page does.

1 NINTENDO DS




UK 2004 | US 2004 | JAPAN 2004

No-one knows what games it'll play. No-one knows what use the two screens will be put to. But hell, we're prepared to take a right good stab at this issue (no doubt you've seen p8 onwards). You want this and so do we. Nintendo are great innovators – they were first with the analogue stick – and we want the future TODAY. But we'll, y'know... have to wait until May. For E3. Mmm.

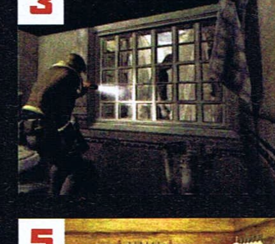
2 FINAL FANTASY: CC



UK 11 MAR | US OUT NOW | JAPAN OUT NOW

As its PAL release date draws nearer, it's no surprise to find *Crystal Chronicles* overtaking *Resident Evil* in your Most Wanted listings. Don't go expecting it to be the best *Final Fantasy* ever – its reliance on GBA link-up to play the game at its fullest will annoy some.

3 RESIDENT EVIL 4



UK 2005 | US 2004 | JAPAN 2004

Slipping from first place down to third on the most wanted list, thanks to the hype building for Nintendo's New Kit, the imminent release of *Crystal Chronicles* and the news that it's not out in the UK till 2005. Despite the slight slide, a bit of gratuitous gore is still highly desirable.

4 POKÉMON COLOSSEUM



UK SPRING | US 22 MAR | JAPAN OUT NOW

Pokémon grows up (a bit) and gets dirtier, fusing the usual monster battling with a dark RPG that dumps you straight into hardcore level 30+ encounters in a desert wasteland.

5 HARVEST MOON



UK 19 MAR | US 4 MAR | JAPAN OUT NOW

Grab yourself a wife (we'd go for Muffy the mucky blonde barmaid), sire a child, mash cows into fat burgers – it's all in a day's (or rather 30 years') work for you down on the farm in the imminent Gamecube sequel. Could well prove a 'sleeper' hit.

6 PRINCE OF PERSIA



UK 27 FEB | US OUT NOW | JAPAN TBC

The Iranian monarch bounds up the Most Wanted charts for the last time; just think – you can rush out and snap up a copy of your sixth most wanted game any day now. Unless you're reading this in March. In which case, you could have got it last week. Hurry up.

7 METAL GEAR SOLID



UK 12 MAR | US 4 MAR | JAPAN 11 MAR

Twin Snakes. Double the fun? Find out in this very issue, with the very first, very independent review of Konami/Silicon Knights' update. As we write this, we can see Martin's taking a cloud of bullets to the face. Nasty. *Very* nasty.

8 KILLER 7



UK 2005 | US 2004 | JAPAN 2004

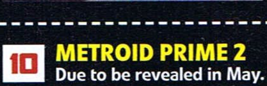
It's good to see you supporting original – some would say unique – titles. Capcom's moody blood-soaked adult comic book of fun remains one of the most intriguing new titles for Gamecube – but will the fact that it's slipped to 2005 in the UK quell your hunger?

! JAMES BOND: E.O.N.



UK 27 FEB | US OUT NOW | JAPAN OUT NOW

EA's anticipated third-person outing for Bond should rectify the disappointment of *Agent Under Fire* and *Nightfire*. More stealthy elements, better vehicles and an enhanced combat system? The genuine faces 'n' voice talent? EA, you spoil us...



#	Title	Comment	UK	US	JAPAN
10	METROID PRIME 2	Due to be revealed in May.	TBC	TBC	TBC
11	MARIO 128	An unsurprising new entry.	TBC	TBC	TBC
12	DONKEY KONGA	The best bongo game ever.	TBC	TBC	OUT NOW
13	ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS +	Better than *Three Swords*.	TBC	TBC	18 MAR
14	MARIO TENNIS	Likely to cause a racquet.	TBC	TBC	TBC
15	STARFOX 2	Namco animal murder-'em-up.	TBC	TBC	TBC
16	SPLINTER CELL: PT	Featuring a French train. Really.	MAR	16 MAR	TBC
17	SYMPHONIA	Goi-gous RPG from Namco.	TBC	1 APR	OUT NOW
18	STARCRAFT: GHOST	Expect this in the autumn now.	TBC	TBC	TBC
19	MARIO GOLF	New entry for Mazza's latest.	5 MAR	OUT NOW	OUT NOW
20	R: RACING	Released by EA in the UK soon.	19 MAR	OUT NOW	OUT NOW
21	PSO III C.A.R.D.	Reviewed last issue.	TBC	TBC	OUT NOW
22	SPIDER-MAN 2	Freeform crime-bustin'.	9 JUL	28 JUN	TBC
23	GEIST	Haunting GC-exclusive FPS.	TBC	TBC	OUT NOW
24	PIKMIN 2	Shigsy's pet project.	TBC	TBC	TBC
25	PAC-MAN VS	Smart multiplayer pill-chewer.	TBC	TBC	TBC

WRITE TO... MAILBOX/NGC/30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW OR EMAIL NGC@FUTURENET.CO.UK

THIS MONTH

We grab a copy of *Everything or Nothing*, strap it to a table and aim a laser at its groin until it squeals its secrets. Or rather, we get the full review code, play it and let you know what we think. Yes. Turn to p54 to get the verdict.

ULTRA RELEASE LIST

The latest on every Nintendo system game in development – updated monthly!

UK RELEASES

The most accurate listing available – although be aware that slippages can occur. All titles Gamecube unless otherwise stated.

FEBRUARY

Date	Title	Publisher
26	Kirby Air Ride	Nintendo
27	Dragon's Lair 3D: Special Edition	THQ
27	James Bond 007 in... Everything or Nothing	EA
27	James Bond 007 in... Everything or Nothing (GBA)	EA
27	Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time	Ubi Soft
27	Puyo Pop Fever	Sega
27	Sonic Battle (GBA)	Sega/THQ
TBC	Fire Emblem (GBA)	Nintendo
TBC	Haunted Mansion	TDK/Take2
TBC	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Konami

MARCH

Date	Title	Publisher
5	Jet Set Radio (GBA)	Sega/Atari
11	Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles	Nintendo
12	Disney's Aladdin (GBA)	Capcom
12	Disney's Hide & Sneak	Capcom
12	Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes	Konami
12	Resident Evil Code: Veronica X	Capcom
12	Sabrewulf (GBA)	THQ
12	Spawn: Armageddon	Namco/EA
12	Tak & The Power of Juju	THQ
12	Tak & The Power of Juju (GBA)	THQ
18	Sword of Mana (GBA)	Nintendo
19	The Cat in the Hat (GBA)	Vivendi
19	Harvest Moon 2: Friends of Mineral Town (GBA)	Ubi Soft
19	Harvest Moon 2: It's a Wonderful Life	Ubi Soft
19	Max Payne (GBA)	Rockstar/Take 2
19	MTX Mototrax	Activision
19	Scooby Doo! 2 Monsters Unleashed (GBA)	THQ
19	Scooby Doo! Mystery Mayhem	THQ
26	Boktai (GBA)	Konami
26	R: Racing	Namco/EA
26	Shining Soul 2 (GBA)	Sega/THQ
26	Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow (GBA)	Ubi Soft
26	Yu-Gi-Oh! World Championship Tournament 2004	Konami
28	Bruce Lee: Return of the Legend (GBA)	Vivendi
TBC	Beyond Good & Evil	Ubi Soft
TBC	Goblin Commander	Jaleco
TBC	Pool Paradise	Ignition
TBC	Scooby Doo! Mystery Mayhem	THQ

APRIL

Date	Title	Publisher
2	Mission: Impossible Operation Surma	Atari
TBC	Metroid: Zero Mission (GBA)	Nintendo
TBC	Pikmin 2	Nintendo
TBC	Pokémon Channel	Nintendo
TBC	Shining Force: Resurrection of the Dark Dragon (GBA)	Sega/THQ
TBC	World Championship Pool 2004	Jaleco

MAY

Date	Title	Publisher
28	Asterix & Obelix XXL	Atari
28	Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban	EA
28	Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (GBA)	EA

JUNE

Date	Title	Publisher
25	Shrek 2	Activision
25	Shrek 2 (GBA)	Activision
TBC	Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour	Nintendo
TBC	Mario Golf: Advance Tour (GBA)	Nintendo

JULY

Date	Title	Publisher
9	Spider-Man The Movie 2	Activision
9	Spider-Man 2 The Movie (GBA)	Activision

TBC 2004

Title	Publisher
Animal Crossing 2	Nintendo
Archer Maclean's 3D Pool (GBA)	Ignition
Bad Boys II	Empire
Baten Kaitos	Namco
Burnout 3	Criterion/EA
Call of Duty: Finest Hour	Activision
Custom Robo	Nintendo
Custom Robo GX (GBA)	Nintendo
Donkey Konga	Nintendo
Donkey Kong Country 2 (GBA)	Nintendo
Extreme Force	Namco
Fantastic Four	Activision
FIFA 2005	EA
F-Zero: Legend of Falcon (GBA)	Nintendo
Game Zero (Working Title)	Zoo
Geist	Nintendo
Good Cop Bad Cop	Revolution
Good Cop Bad Cop (GBA)	Revolution
Hamtaro: Rainbow Rescue (GBA)	Nintendo
He-Man: Masters of the Universe	TDK/Take2
The Incredibles	THQ
The Incredibles (GBA)	THQ
Lemony Snicket	Activision
Lemony Snicket (GBA)	Activision
Madden NFL 2005	EA
Mario Tennis	Nintendo
Mario Tennis (GBA)	Nintendo
Mega Man Battle Network 4 (GBA)	Capcom
Mega Man X Command Mission	Capcom
Metroid Prime 2	Nintendo
Mario & Donkey Kong (GBA)	Nintendo
Mortal Kombat 6	Midway
Muppets Party Cruise	TDK/Take 2
NBA Live 2005	EA
NHL 2005	EA
Nightmare Creatures	Ubi Soft
Nintendo Puzzle Collection	Nintendo
Pac-Man Vs	Nintendo/Namco
Phantasy Star Online Episode III: C.A.R.D.	Sega
Pokémon Colosseum	Nintendo
Puyo Pop (GBA)	Sega/Atari
Rainbow Six 3	Ubi Soft
Robocop	Avalon
Scary Tales	Wanadoo
Shaman King	Konami
Shark's Tale	Activision
Sonic Advance 3 (GBA)	Sega/THQ
Space Channel 5 (GBA)	Sega/Atari
Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow	Ubi Soft
Starcraft: Ghost	Vivendi
Starfox 2	Nintendo
Super Mario 128	Nintendo
Tales of Symphonia	Namco
Unity	Lionhead
Virtua Fighter Cyber Generation	Sega
Wario Ware Inc.	Nintendo
X-Men Legends	Activision
Yu-Gi-Oh! Falsebound Kingdom	Konami
The Legend of Zelda GC 2	Nintendo
The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords +	Nintendo

TBC 2005

Title	Publisher
Killer 7	Capcom
Resident Evil 4	Capcom
The Movies	Activision
TimeSplitters 3	EA

US RELEASES

The most important US releases. Fancy importing one?





MARCH

Date	Game	Publisher
1	Mario Golf: Advance Tour (GBA)	Nintendo
2	MTX Mototrax	Activision
2	Phantasy Star Online Episode III: C.A.R.D. Revolution	Sega
4	Harvest Moon: A Wonderful Life	Ubi Soft
4	Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes	Konami
9	Mega Man Anniversary Collection	Capcom
16	Little League Baseball (GBA)	NewKidCo
16	Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow	Ubi Soft
22	Pokémon Colosseum	Nintendo
23	Mega Man Mania (GBA)	Capcom
23	Mission: Impossible Operation Surma	Atari
31	Street Jam Basketball (GBA)	Destination Software

APRIL

Date	Game	Publisher
28	Need for Speed: Porsche Unleashed (GBA)	EA

MAY

Date	Game	Publisher
10	Shrek 2: The Game	Activision

JUNE

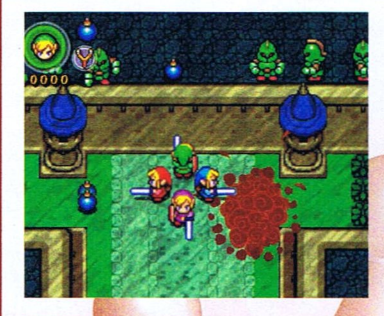
Date	Game	Publisher
28	Spider-Man 2	Activision

TBC 2004

Game	Publisher
Donkey Konga	Nintendo/Namco
Starcraft: Ghost	Blizzard

JAP RELEASES

The best future Japanese releases. Crazy great fun.





FEBRUARY

Date	Game	Publisher
26	Rogue Ops	Kemco
26	V-Rally 3 (Atari Hot Series) (GBA)	Atari
26	Dragon Ball Z: Bukuu Tougeki (GBA)	Banpresto
26	Rika-Chan no Oshare Nikki (GBA)	Marvelous Entertainment

MARCH

Date	Game	Publisher
4	Custom Robo	Nintendo
11	Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes	Konami
18	Duel Masters 2 (GBA)	Takara
18	Mermaid Melody: Pichi Pichi Picchi Pichi Pichitto Live Start (GBA)	Konami
18	Yu-Gi-Oh! Sugoroku no Sugoroku (GBA)	Konami
18	Zelda no Densetsu: 4tsu no Ken+	Nintendo
24	Puyo Pop Fever	Sega

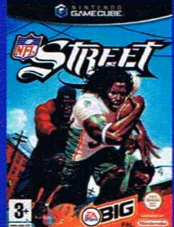
TBC 2004

Game	Publisher
BioHazard 4	Capcom
Killer 7	Capcom
Mario & Donkey Kong (GBA)	Nintendo
Mario Tennis	Nintendo
Metroid Prime 2	Nintendo
Metroid: Zero Mission (GBA)	Nintendo
Pikmin 2	Nintendo
Starfox 2	Nintendo/Namco
Virtua Fighter Cyber Generation: Judgement Six No Yabou	Sega

THESE JUST OUT!

Missed last issue? Here's NGC's pick of the freshest games around…









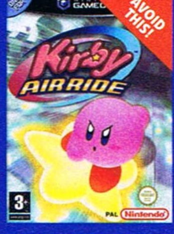
PRINCE OF PERSIA
NGC/90 ■ 91%
An **NGC** star game. We scooped the exclusive review last issue – you should be playing it right now…

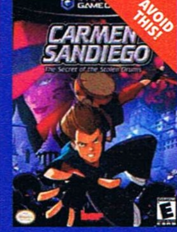
NFL STREET
NGC/90 ■ 79%
Madden-lite. Not quite as accessible as its basketball cousin, *NBA Street*, but ram-jammed with modes and challenges.

XGRA
NGC/89 ■ 71%
If you're future-racer mad and you're now bored – pah! – of *F-Zero*, try this. It's not The Best Thing Ever, nor is it utter pap.

GOTCHA FORCE
NGC/90 ■ 69%
Capcom's arena-battling robot title with a *Pokémon*-style collection aspect. For younger gamers only.











ROGUE OPS
NGC/90 ■ 62%
With *Hitman 2* and *Splinter Cell* out there, we can't recommend this espionage-fest. It's never bad – just fun in fits and starts.

KIRBY AIR RIDE
NGC/85 ■ 51%
We reviewed this on its Japanese release – and didn't see any point wasting space re-reviewing it on its UK release. It stinks.

CARMEN SANDIEGO
NOT REVIEWED
A title sneaking out before we've been given a chance to review it. You know what that means…

THE POWER-PUFF GIRLS
NOT REVIEWED
Hey look – another game in the shops without a review! Do we really need more Powerpuff guff? No.



DID YOU KNOW?

Zelda is the princess of the series (yes, we know you knew that) and she shares her name with another 'Zelda' from Terrahawks. Now, while Shigsy's Zelda is the beautiful, and wily heiress to the land of Hyrule, the Terrahawks' Zelda resembles a cross between Einstein, Esther Rantzen and a victim of horrific third-degree burns. Oh yeah, and unlike the Nintendo Zelda, Terrahawks was unmitigated *rubbish*.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- A predominantly four-player title that's built around Nintendo's GC-GBA connectivity feature.
- Three game modes: Hyrule Adventure, Navi Trackers and Shadow Battle.
- Revamped, high resolution 2D graphics with incredible effects and animations.



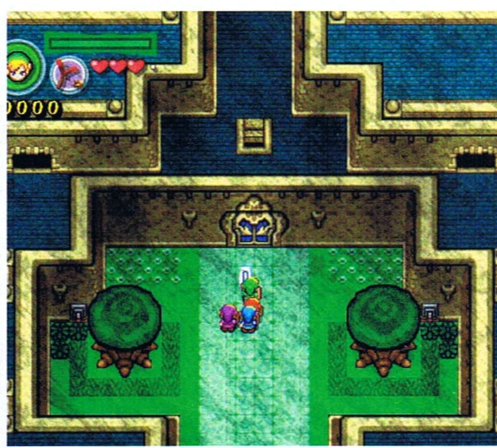
FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Nintendo

What have they done before?
All the Zeldas ever. Not counting the dump Phillips CDi ones… (NGC/24-present, 90+%)
They're all brilliant. Yes, really.



△ Ooooh look! It's the swirly, orangey bomby smoky business from *Wind Waker. Four Swords* is full of dear sweet touches from previous *Legend of Zelda* games.



△ The single-player mode in action? If this is the case, one player will control all four Links at the same time…



△ There are numerous different battle arenas to fight in in Shadow Battle.



△ Many of the locations are reminiscent of the ones in *Link to the Past*.



△ …it's possible that players will be able to cycle through different Link formations like in sweaty ol' *Sonic Heroes*.

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA FOUR SWORDS



One for all and all for one!

Nintendo's multiplayer gem is on its way…

Nintendo have been harping on about GBA connectivity for absolutely ages and, apart from *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles* and *Pac Man VS*, we've seen precious little evidence that the feature is really worth bothering with. *Four Swords* is going to change that.

FOUR TIMES THE FUN?

Anyone played *Zelda: LTTP's* Four Swords extra? No? Well, shame on you, because it's one of the gaming worlds most criminally underplayed experiences – with you and your mates navigating through dungeons, solving puzzles together, combining special items together, help each other out and using your combined power to rip apart some of the most inventive boss encounters you're ever likely to play. In the midst of

SINGLE?



While single-player details are pretty scarce right now, Nintendo have confirmed that solo players won't be left out of the action. Also, much like in new release *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*, single players won't have to use a GBA as a controller.

We've heard rumours that the single-player game will involve players taking control of four Link's simultaneously, although we don't really know how this will work – but we'd imagine that the experience would have to be greatly reworked from the multiplayer game.



SMALL TALK

The GBA is an integral part of the gameplay. Here's how it all works...



■ Enter different locations (like a well, a cavern, a hole in the ground etc) in the main overworld, and you'll often have to look to the GBA to continue your questing activities...



■ Here, Link has entered a house. He can now pick up items and such-like without the other players knowing what he's up too. Cunning. Especially in the Shadow Battle mode.



■ In Hyrule Adventures, you'll quite often get split up from your party and so you'll need your GBA for this. This is especially true for the Navi Tracker mode, where the TV is scarcely used.



△ Entering important locations will often require...



△ ...teamwork. The best aspect of the game is...



△ ...this co-operative element, combined with the...



△ ...ability to screw your friends over in cruel ways.





△ It doesn't look like much from these shots does it? You'll love it once you've played it, though.



△ The game isn't shy with the subtle graphical touches. We love these transparent layers...



△ ...that drift over the top of the screen.



△ It's Tingle! Someone shoot him down so we can administer justice.

all this lovey-dovey co-operative gameplay, Nintendo have added a cruel twist that forces you to stab each other in the back, so you'll find yourself blinding your comrades, knocking them out of the way, or even better, chucking them into bottomless pits. Quite simply then, a fantastic experience.

FOUR TO THE FLOOR

In the Gamecube version there are three different modes available. Navi Trackers, Shadow Battle and Hyrule Adventures. The latter of these three modes is very similar to the GBA version of the game – which is a *very* good thing. It explores the basic idea and expands it, with bigger areas, more involving puzzles and more items to use. On top of this the game has been the recipient a huge graphical overhaul. It mightn't look like it from these shots, but the game is stunning, with loads of stunning lighting effects, transparent layers and suchlike livening up the action like you wouldn't believe.

The other two modes are a little simpler perhaps, but by no means less enjoyable. Navi Trackers sees the four of you high tailing it across a massive map attempting to seek out special stamps hidden about the place. In this game your television works like an information hub (telling you where all the other players are for example) while you navigate the world on your GBA screen, thereby hiding the exact nature of your activities from the competing players.

Of course, no multiplayer game would be complete without an out-and-out battle mode. Thankfully *Four Swords* doesn't disappoint. It's got a fab Shadow Battle mode, which allows you to batter each other until there's only one of you left to claim victory. Again, things aren't as simple as they seem, though: with many areas in the battle arena only visible on your GBA screen, the player can access hidden areas for extra items, and the other players won't know what on earth the hidden player is up to. Like *Pac-Man Vs*, this is a game that doesn't look like much in screenshots. But believe us, it's already a whole heap of fun.

> "FIND YOURSELF BLINDING YOUR COMRADES, KNOCKING THEM OUT OF THE WAY OR CHUCKING THEM INTO PITS"



NGC VERDICT

After playing through *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles* we've really got the four-player GBA bug – and seeing as we're all big fans of the GBA's *Four Swords* we really can't communicate just how much we're all looking forward to this one. Hopefully, gamers won't overlook this just because it's a 2D, top-down adventure.



UK TBA | US 11TH MAY | JAPAN 18TH MARCH



ANTICIPATION RATING







1 2 3 4 5





△ Force the couch potato off the sofa and the pair of you can explore the countryside. Come on Pika, walk some of that lard off your arse!



△ Your Pikachu is a wild one that invaded your house. Most people put down poison when wild rodents move in, but you decide to keep him...



THE KNOWLEDGE

- Find all the missing episodes of Pichu Bros to make a full DVD-quality animation.
- Capture stills of your favourite scenes from the programmes and colour them in.
- Collect 'NiceCard' cards in Normal, Motion (lenticular) and Platinum (with sound).
- Acquire minigames, including Pokémon Mini.



△ *Pokémon Channel* is absolutely rammed with monsters. Pokélovers rejoice!



△ Take a shot of the Pichu Bros and colour it in, then send it to Smeargle's art programme.



△ Pika has a tantrum 'cos he's not allowed to watch late-night E4.

FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Nintendo

What have they done before?
Pokémon Ruby/Sapphire (GBA, 90%)
The best instalments so far in the world-dominating catch-'em-up. Excellent stuff.



POKÉMON CHANNEL

TOGETHER WITH PIKACHU

Pikachu adores the idiot box, it would seem. Funny, that...



△ Acquire trading cards. *All* of them...

Crisis! The Pokémon Channel has lost segments of its best show, Pichu Bros. As your house has been colonised by a wild Pikachu, Professor Oak asks you to watch the programmes and help locate the missing cartoon segments.

Squirtle's shopping channel. After watching shows you report back to Oak on their contents. Drag Pika away from the box and you can explore the countryside, interacting with wild pokémon and collecting items such as virtual cards. (What is it with games and cards nowadays?)

The problem with all this is that it

> **"YOUR LITTLE YELLOW PAL WILL HAPPILY WATCH TELLY WITH YOU FOR HOURS"**

Luckily your little yellow pal will happily watch telly with you for hours. What's more, if you watch Wobuffet's quiz show and do well, you earn cash that you can blow on

looks a bit, well, *dull*. There isn't any battling. Low on action and high on collection, pokéfans are definitely going to love it, but we'll have to see if it's got enough meat for non-fans.



NGC VERDICT

Away from the Game Boy, Pokémon games don't have a brilliant track record. This looks like it might fall into the same trap – packed with pokémon but very low on actual gameplay. After all, you can watch telly at any time, so do you really want to do it in a game too? The only advantage is that Pika won't nab all the Pringles...



UK APRIL | US NOW | JAPAN NOW



ANTICIPATION RATING








DID YOU KNOW? Back in 2000, Turkey's Health Minister urged TV stations to stop showing the Pokémon cartoon after two children jumped off balconies believing they had pokémon powers.



I HOPE AUNTIE KEPT THE RECEIPT.

SO I CAN GET MY HANDS ON THESE.



AMAZING GAMECUBE GAMES FROM £19.99.

PLAYER'S CHOICE

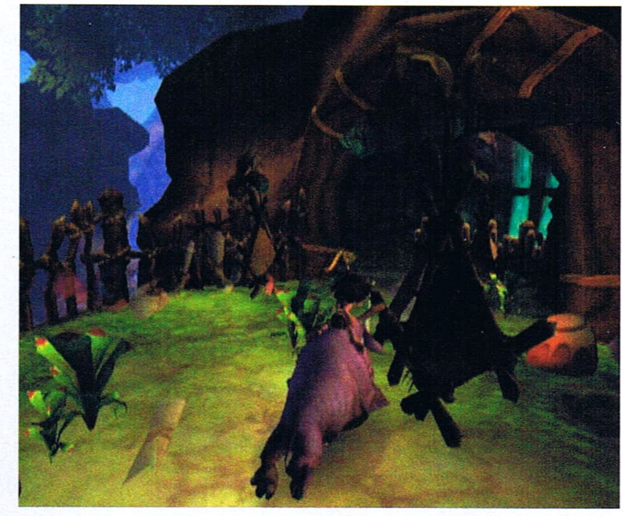


NICKELODEON

Developers Avalanche have been backed up by Televisual Goliaths of the Teeny Tiny Toon World, Nickelodeon. It shows too – they had access to their voice actors, artists and script writers – helping to giving the game its lovely polished look. So happy were Avalanche with Nickelodeon's support that they're looking to continue their relationship in the future.



△ When the orangutans bend the palm trees to pick off a banana, you can hop onto the leaves before catapulting yourself over chasms.

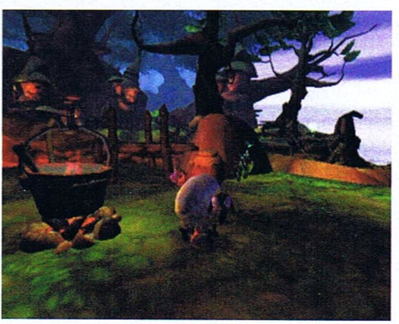


△ The game world's full of animals that you can ride around. This stumpy rhino can smash through any obstacles that get in your way.

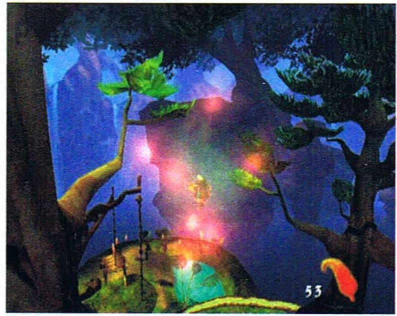


THE KNOWLEDGE

- You're a Juju spirit (yes, you are) on a mission to help Tak save his jungle homeworld.
- It's got a snowboarding section in it. The developers proudly claim (you're going to *love* this one) that it has just as much in it as EA's *SSX3. Yeah riiiiiighhht*, no porky-pies there then…
- Ride animals like ostriches and rhinos around. If you like, you can even beat the animals with your stick – with hilarious consequences, naturally…



△ These sheep crop up all over the place. Bizarrely, you can insert yourself inside them.



△ The levels are all pleasingly large in scale, with plenty of detail and interactive features.

TAK AND THE POWER OF JUJU

The way things are going, this Tak won't leave you feeling blu(e)…

FACTFILE



Who's making it?
Avalanche

What have they done before?
MK Mythologies: Sub Zero (NGC/11 9, yes – nine – %)
"Could only be less enjoyable if it squirted acid in your face" said Kittsy way back in our N64 days.



It takes a brave developer to create and unleash a new platform hero on an inevitably suspicious public. Anyone remember (or should that be *want* to remember?) Kao the Kangaroo or Bubsy the Bobcat? No? Anyone? Would anyone really care if Ty the Tasmanian Tiger tripped on a rock and impaled himself on his own Flame-arang – or whatever it is he uses? Didn't think so.

So it's with some surprise, then, that we found *Tak* to be a pleasantly accomplished platformer. Okay, it's not amazing, not by any stretch of the imagination, but developers Avalanche have obviously gone to great pains to create a vibrant world that's full of wildlife and interactive features to play around with.

The game consists of simple platforming tasks – jumping from rock to rock, swinging on vines and the like – but it's the subtle puzzles that really enhance the playing experience. You can lure randy rams away from vital areas with sheep. Hungry orangutans bend palm trees to use as catapults and angry apes can be harassed into dispatching enemies for you.

We didn't think it would happen, but we're quietly impressed.

> "A VIBRANT WORLD THAT'S FULL OF WILDLIFE AND FEATURES TO PLAY WITH"

NGC VERDICT



Hardly a rival to Mario, granted, but this is all good, sold platforming stuff. The detail in the game world is particularly impressive, and there's a pleasing level of imagination when it comes to the tasks Tak has to accomplish. For younger gamers in particular, we predict this'll prove an enjoyable little adventure.

UK MARCH | US OUT NOW | JAPAN TBC

ANTICIPATION RATING







1 2 **3** 4 5

DID YOU KNOW? Juju is a word of West African origin meaning fetish or evil spirit. It can also be an object superstitiously believed to hold magical powers. 'Juju' was Word of the Day for Wednesday, September the 1st, 1999.









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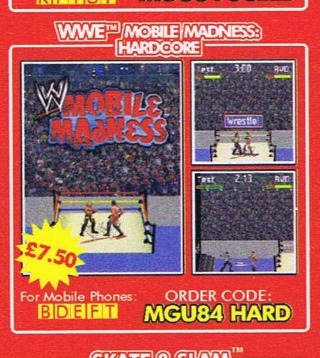
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XIII



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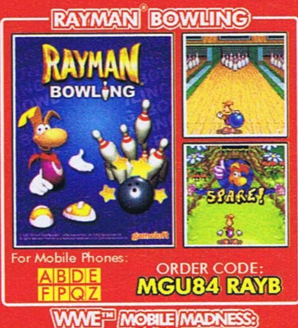
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SIBERIAN STRIKE



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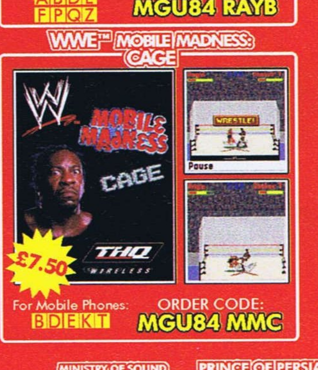
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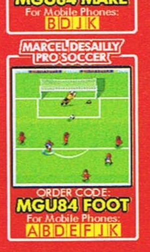
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ROUNDUP



Δ This is just one of many arenas where your personally-built 'bot is put to the test.



Δ Select parts to get your robot exactly how you want it.



Δ There are 200 different robot parts and weapons to choose, so you should be able to refine your robot to suit your playing style perfectly.

CUSTOM ROBO
BATTLE REVOLUTION

Customisation's the key to *Battle Revolution's* appeal – as you'd expect from a game called *Custom Robo* – the fourth installment in a series that whirred into life on N64 in 1999 and is about to hit Gamecubes all over Japan. The idea? Build your fighting mech from a selection of over 200 weapons and body parts, then send it out to trash your rivals in one of 30 combat arenas. Think *Pokémon* mixed with Sega's *Virtual On*, and you're pretty much there. Actually, throw in a heap of *Smash Bros* as well – there's a real emphasis on multiplayer carnage, with support for up to four-player free-for-alls on one screen. The simple combat mechanics might prove a turn off for some expecting deeper strategies, but the customisation options should make this a winner.

Unleashed in Japan as you read this



Δ The graphics look a bit, well, *Tron*-like to us. Could the lack of reality put people off?



Δ This attack is cool – but can the robot that dealt it cope when we get right up close?

HOT NEW MOBILE ENTERTAINMENT

GBA ROUNDUP



Δ Waiting for you at the end of the game is a massive twist – we wouldn't want to spoil it.



Δ *Zero Mission* goes deeper into the *Metroid* story. Still lots of shootery, though.

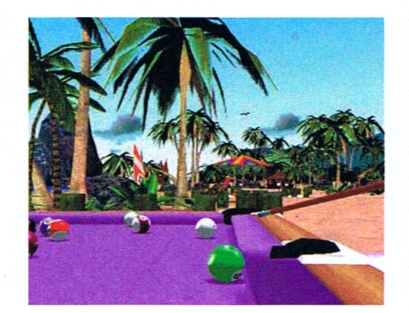
METROID
ZERO MISSION

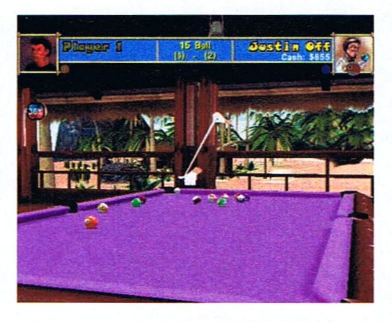


Americans and keen GBA importers will be playing Samus Aran's brand-new adventure as you read this, the lucky fools. Well, we say the game's 'brand-new', but in it Samus returns to planet Zebes, the site of her first-ever battle with pirates and malevolent aliens, so there will almost certainly be bits that will seem familiar to fans of the series.

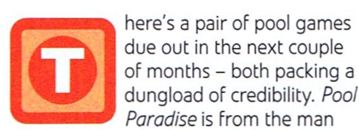
Essentially a remix of the first ever *Metroid* – which was launched on the NES all the way back in 1986 – it boasts new abilities for Samus, a new layout (based on the original game's locations), new unlockable rewards (including the full, unaltered NES game and the chance to reveal an art gallery if you've got a copy of *Fusion*), all fuelled by truly inspiring music and visuals. 'Awesome', no?

Lock and load in April





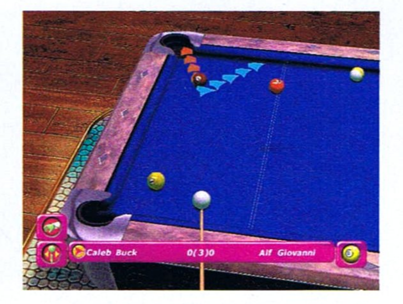
POOL PARADISE



There's a pair of pool games due out in the next couple of months – both packing a dungload of credibility. *Pool Paradise* is from the man they call Mr Pool. You know, Archer Maclean? The Ball Lord? Papa 8? The bloke who did *Jimmy White's Cueball?* He's teamed up with the Whirlwind for the fourth time to create a game stuffed with 12 variations on pool, including eight- and nine-ball. It all takes place in a fantasy island setting (hence the name), with minigames and secrets to unlock.

Out in March





WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP POOL 2004

Brought to you by the same bods behind Codemasters' polished *World Champ. Snooker*, this imaginatively titled pool experience packs in 11 of the world's best nine-ball players. None of whom we've heard of apart from ex-snooker stars Steve Davis and Tony 'Tornado' Drago (so it's Tornado versus Whirlwind, then…). *WCP 2004* throws up six modes, with trick shots, a snooker mode and 'Fun Games' backing up the licensed main game. But will the fantasy insanity of *Paradise* win out?

Racking 'em up in April

THE HAUNTED MANSION



△ Get behind the bottles. She'll smash them, the booze'll catch fire and light up the room.



Paying some respec' to Luigi's ghost-filled gaff comes a game that shares more in common with the ancient Disney ride than the Eddie Murphy spooktacular/ghoulishly funny film of the same name. The Beverly Hills cop's nowhere to be seen here. Instead, you play Zeke Halloway, a ghost hunter trapped in the dark residence and out to reveal the truth behind the series of murders that have taken place there since it was built.

Armed with an ancient lamp – which packs six different power settings – you work your way through the environment and a series of what are, essentially, boss encounters. Collect the lost souls (there are 999 in all), solve a puzzle, restore light to a room and… move onto the next. It's pretty much by-the-numbers stuff – although there are some neat puzzle elements thrown in, which help liven up the routine soul-sucking. For instance, there's one bit where you're shrinky-dinked down to the size of a matchbox and have to leg it around a pool table, aligning yourself with balls so that a giant spectral presence ends up potting them while aiming for you.

It all bounds along well and is, dare we say it, 'parent-friendly' (yes, WE DARE) – *Resident Evil* this ain't. But steer clear until we give it a full playtest next issue.

Out right about now

SABRE WULF



Way back in 1984, Arnie was after a piece of Sarah Connor in The Terminator, Madonna was slopping about the place like a virgin and Ultimate (Rare) were on a Spectrum 48K high with tough-as-old-pith-helmets jungle maze-a-thon *Sabre Wulf*. Twenty – *TWENTY* – years on, they're re-inventing it for GBA. It still features Sabre Man's quest to retrieve the shattered pieces of the Sabre Wulf amulet and ultimately defeat his nemesis – the misspelt Wulf – but with a slick 3D engine, more varied locations and a mix of different play styles. Review coming next issue.

Due out 12th March



△ There are eight villages to visit. Trade in the treasure/cash you find for armour and creatures…



△ You'll need to master the unique powers of Sabre Man's creatures in order to defeat dog-boy.


IT'S-A MIYA-MOTO!
Shigeru Miyamoto is a very busy man, so we were overjoyed that he was able to take time out from his busy schedule to talk to us. Just don't blame us if any of Ninty's projects run late…
Nintendo



HELLO 'MOTO!



Δ *Donkey Kong* – featuring Mario and the Peach-like Pauline – was Miyamoto-san's first game.



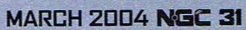
Δ *Pikmin 2* is Shigsy's current project.

The man who made Mario opens his mind to NGC…



If you could play Top Trumps with videogame designers, you'd look to Japan for the strongest cards. And for the card that can crush every other in the pack, you'd go to Nintendo. **NGC** did just that, having been granted exclusive access to the World's Greatest Game Designer, Shigeru Miyamoto. We're currently sat opposite him in a clean, spacious Nintendo office in Japan's former capital city and cultural centre, Kyoto. The WGGD looks pleased with the box of Belgian chocolates we've just handed him, and, while sucking on a rum ball, seems more than happy to discuss his past, present and future at Nintendo…

TURN OVER
To find out what drives and inspires the man who creates the games the whole world wants to play. And watch him open a box of chocolates.




Shigsy may not be instantly recognisable to some, but his creations are global icons. He *made* Mario.


Mmm… milk, plain or creamy old white? Share 'em out, eh, Shigeru…

NGC: What previous work experience did you have before you started at Nintendo?
Shigsy: As soon as I finished at the Kanazawa Municipal Art and Craft college, where I majored in design, I went to Nintendo. I didn't have a business career at all before I came here, but I always used to doodle a lot of cartoons in school. Also, I was in a garage band during college.

NGC: How did you end up at Nintendo, and what did you start out doing there?
Shigsy: I searched through several companies before deciding on Nintendo. I wanted to do some sort of product planning, but my first jobs wound up being graphic design. I did things like making cards and boardgame designs. I also developed the designs and art of Nintendo's early arcade games. The first game I did the actual game design for was *Donkey Kong*. From *Donkey Kong* up until *Super Mario*, I worked on about a dozen different games, including stuff like *Excitebike* and *Tennis*.

Shigsy didn't work on *Wario Ware*, but he loves it.

NGC: Nintendo used to have a pretty sizeable arcade business. Was it phased out because of the success of the NES? Did you ever regret not being able to work on more advanced arcade games?
Shigsy: Actually the decision was made to stop arcade games by the man at the top a long time before the system actually came to market. Yamauchi instructed all of R&D to focus on the home market instead of the arcade business. In those days, it was a risky decision, because the viability of the machine was as of yet unproven. We were worried about the decision at the time, but it turned out to be the right path for the company to have taken.

"THE STRESS SOMETIMES TAKES A TOLL ON ME PHYSICALLY, TO THE POINT EVEN WHERE I DEVELOPED HEART PROBLEMS IN THE PAST"

NGC: Did the success of the NES and *Mario* change the company, and what did that success mean for you on a personal level?
Shigsy: The reason why I decided to work for a company like Nintendo instead of by myself is because I wanted to be free to create as I pleased, and to have the company to benefit from my work. The company, in turn, would act as a 'sponsor' and a distributor to deliver my ideas to the public.

As such, Nintendo eventually came to let me do just that, and the success early on of things like *Donkey Kong* and *Mario* allowed me the freedom to pursue the creation of new things.

NGC: What time period at Nintendo did you enjoy the most and why?
Shigsy: Well, that's really hard to say. I always try to enjoy myself here at Nintendo, no matter what I do. There have been times in the past when I've endured some hardships, like when we're preparing new hardware and games for launch. The stress sometimes really takes a toll on me physically, to the point even where I developed some heart problems in the past. Apart from that and spiritually speaking, though, I always feel like I've been trying to fulfil myself and make myself happy here.

So despite some of my physical hardships I have always felt spiritually fulfilled and happy at Nintendo.

NGC: We understand that your role at Nintendo these days is quite different from what you did in the past. Can you tell us more about what your current job consists of?
Shigsy: What I've been doing lately hasn't changed a lot from when I started, really. It's more the quantity of things to do that has changed. Right before I came here to speak with you, I was checking



△ **N64 – was it a failure? We don't think so, and neither does Miyamoto.**

up on the progress of some WIP (work in progress) games. That's the sort of work I enjoy the most. I also have to attend meetings to assist in making future decisions for Nintendo and have to train the next generation of designers for Nintendo so we can continue to provide the sort of content for which we are known in the future as well.

Let me be a bit more specific. The company knows that it would be better to allow me to work at the forefront of game development. That's why the company gives me

> **"AT NINTENDO, WHEN WE HAVE A GOOD IDEA WE NOT ONLY CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT THROUGH SOFTWARE, BUT THROUGH HARDWARE AS WELL"**

so much autonomy. However, with a lot more at stake for the company, it may be in Nintendo's best interests to nurture new employees with potential to take the place of people like me for when I will eventually have to leave. Still, I keep on doing a lot of what I used to do, but alongside that I have many other duties which I didn't have in the past.

NGC: So, do you think of the carefree days of the past a lot or are the bigger responsibilities that you now hold more to your liking?

Shigsy: Nintendo is unique because it makes both innovative games and hardware. When we have a good idea, we not only can take advantage of it through software, but through various hardware and peripherals as well. As long as we have this sort of position, I like the way Nintendo is now better than it was in the past. But really, it's a hard question. I can't say yes or no. When it comes to games I can't always take a hands-on approach, so it's a bit limited. Nintendo publishes two or three dozen games a year now – I can't really work as much on any single game as I used to. I wind up doing training and delegating work to others more than I would like.

I am, however, working closely on *Pikmin 2* and two other undisclosed titles alongside it. I hope we will be able to release both of those titles before the end of the year. I really enjoy the process of designing and creating games, the hands-on approach of designing games is something very special.

For instance, just the other day, I met Mr Hideo Kojima (*Konami's very own Miyamoto* – Ed). He's been regarded as a designer whose work is similar to cinema. He, however, insists he should be known as more of a game designer.

NGC: At last year's E3, Satoru Iwata (Nintendo's president) gave a humble speech, acknowledging mistakes made and making amends for the future. Is that the general mood at the company right now, and how do you feel about Nintendo's performance over the last couple of years?

Shigsy: I think that how people interpret what we say is something that needs to be discussed. Mr Iwata is a former mechanical engineering designer. Sadly, since he is the president, sometimes what he says might be misinterpreted as the whole company's position. Because of his background, when he speaks of not achieving a goal, he talks about it more on a personal level – like challenges that weren't surpassed or expectations he couldn't meet.

When Mr Iwata spoke of the N64, we weren't admitting it was a failure. We just think that maybe things could have been done better – a little smoother and more streamlined perhaps. It was a capable machine, but maybe it was too hard for our third-party developers. We should always be looking back on the past and looking at our experiences to improve ourselves.

He never meant to say the N64 or anything else was an outright mistake. Quite the opposite, since Nintendo is a company built on risk-taking. If we don't take risks, we can't innovate and create new forms of entertainment. If we challenged the established norm, meaning ourselves as well as others, but didn't wholly succeed, we don't consider it a mistake. So what he said was taken out of context and wasn't quite what he wanted to convey. With a background like his, he always feels like things maybe could have been a little bit better than they turned out. Most of the comments that might have been misunderstood were made about two years ago, I think. Mr Iwata talked about the fact that with *Mario* and *Metroid* that they were anticipating greater sales, but they didn't increase hardware sell-through as expected.

Right now, at R&D, we're simply trying to fine-tune our games as much as possible. We had to delay *Pikmin 2*, but that's because I wanted this game to be of the high-quality standards that Nintendo is known for.

Nintendo's major strength is great character franchises. When people speak of Nintendo, they talk of the important Nintendo character franchises. But we're always working on new and original games, too. I think, beyond our established works, Nintendo also has to make efforts to design great, new game series.

NGC: So would you say that at the moment Nintendo is a company in transition?

Shigsy: Yes. After all, the entertainment business has to keep re-inventing itself or it will not persist. When we speak from the viewpoint of the customer, they always want something you can't get from anyone else. I just talked a moment ago about our fine-tuning processes. We used to be able to do this to cater to the veteran game players. But, when we say fine-tuning now, we have to make sure it's accessible to both the veterans and the novice players who are just getting into gaming. It's become very different nowadays from when we could sell massive amounts of games of any sort.

After all, customers want uniqueness. However, people tend to flood to things which are easy to understand. It isn't always easy to make something that's both unique and easy to understand. The current situation is that games are everywhere now. Games themselves aren't



△ **Miyamoto-san started gardening, and then the world got *Pikmin*, which uses textures from his own garden.**

△ **Nintendo's headquarters. Not the place you'd expect such a colourful company to call home.**

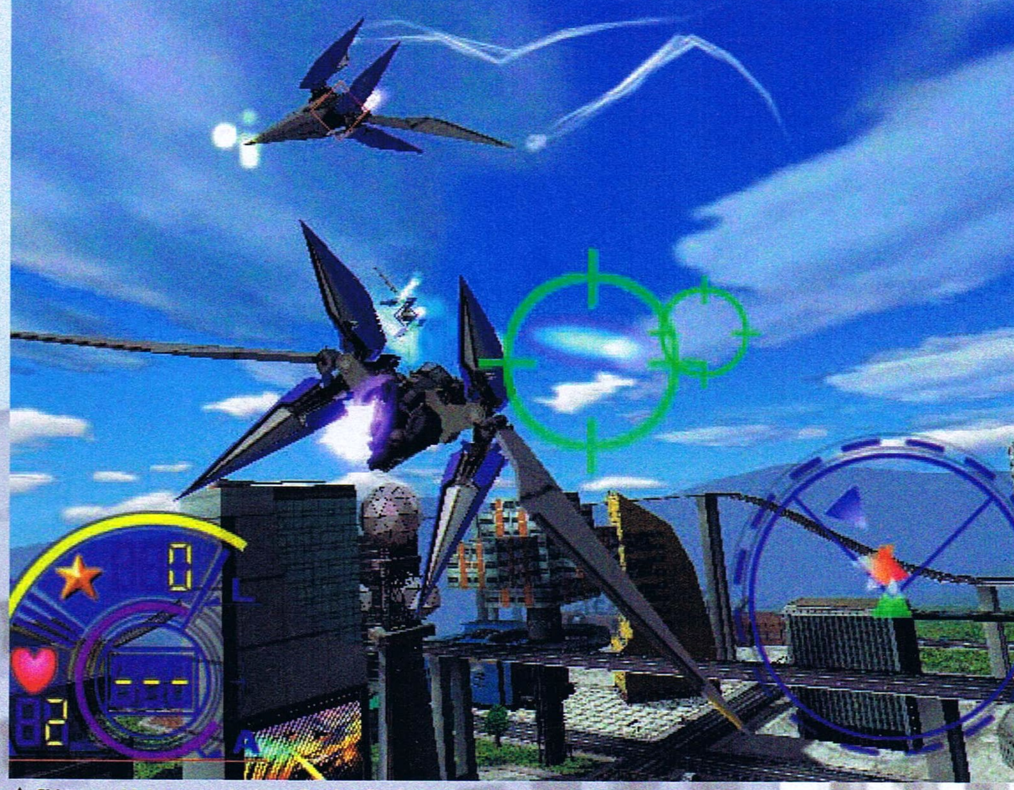
TURN OVER

For everything Shigsy could tell us about the new *Starfox*. No lie! And hear him spills the beans on his puppy. Oh yes…

DID YOU KNOW? 'Kyoto' actually means 'Capital City'. The city's original name was Heian.

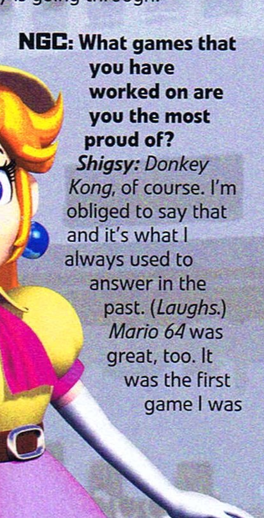


△ Ninty's collaborations with third parties are a huge success.


△ Shigsy couldn't say much about *Starfox*. But he says we should look forward to it. We do. Oh yes, we really *do*.

unique anymore, so you can't simply sell them on the basis of being a videogame. We've constantly had to abandon things we've done in the past. Unless we can change ourselves repeatedly, we can't create anything new and interesting.

So in that regard, yes I would have to say that Nintendo is a company in transition, simply because of the fact that the entertainment industry itself is constantly in transition. We hope we can continue to be a driving force in the constant change this industry is going through.



NGC: What games that you have worked on are you the most proud of?
Shigsy: Donkey Kong, of course. I'm obliged to say that and it's what I always used to answer in the past. (*Laughs.*) *Mario 64* was great, too. It was the first game I was a director on after I hit 40. I was able to put a lot of my best ideas into that one. It was something very important to me, personally. I am never certain of what to say when people ask me questions like this, but I think *Mario 64* is a good one to go with.

NGC: What other companies' videogames have you enjoyed playing recently?
Shigsy: I haven't played a whole lot of other companies' games, actually. I don't really like answering this sort of question, because I don't really have the ability to play other games in depth. But, even though it's a Nintendo product, I really liked *Wario Ware* a lot. I didn't have any involvement with it, so playing it after it was done was something really fresh and new for me.

NGC: There's a trend, in Western markets especially, towards games with violent, adult themes, such as *Grand Theft Auto*. What are your thoughts on this? Do you think that this trend will continue?
Shigsy: It's a difficult question for me to answer. All I can say is that this isn't the sort of game Nintendo wants to make. I suppose whether it's really acceptable depends on the concepts and the ideology the game makers have in mind. As far as I am concerned, my own criteria are "When I play my own game, is it something I can be proud of, is it something I can sit down and play with my kids?" That is what I go for when making games, creating things with universal appeal that can be enjoyed by everyone.

NGC: Tell us your thoughts about Nintendo working with other companies, like Namco, Konami and Sega. How is *Starfox* coming along?
Shigsy: We call them 'collaborations'. What Nintendo is doing differently these days is trying to build strong relationships between the game creators at Nintendo and those at other companies. We don't view it as Nintendo or simply myself working with a company, but rather with the *people* at those companies. We've worked with Nagoshi, Imamura, Naka, Okamoto (before his departure from Capcom) and Kojima… it's not company versus company anymore. These are collaborations between game creators that produce relationships that will continue to be beneficial to all who are involved.

Other hardware companies buy exclusives from third parties. We feel that doesn't benefit the third parties and the consumers very much. Our goal is to combine our strengths so that all parties involved can benefit. Those who we work with get the benefit of working with our famous characters and properties, and the consumers get a broader range of games with characters they recognise and love – while we get more time to continue working on new concepts and ideas. It gives us more resources to develop new and original content. It's a winning situation for everyone involved.

Take *Donkey Konga*, made by the *Taiko no Tatsujin* team at Namco. The controller was made by Nintendo, and Namco made the game itself. Since the taiko drum is a more cultural instrument, we thought something like *Donkey Konga* would have more broad appeal to a world market. This way we ensure that all involved benefit from this mutual cooperation. As for *Starfox*? I can't really say much about it besides… look forward to it! (*Laughs.*)

"BEYOND OUR ESTABLISHED WORKS, NINTENDO HAS TO MAKE EFFORTS TO DESIGN GREAT NEW GAME SERIES"

NGC: We recently visited the Famicom 20th Anniversary exhibit running at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography (see p110 for a look). How did you like participating in the event?
Shigsy: They're exhibiting the long history – 20 years – of Famicom production, which makes me happy. It struck me that they

△ He's accepted the chocs. If he takes the flowers as well, we're going to ask him to marry us. Well, Mim is, at least…

dedicated about three metres to the time period I put a lot of time and energy into, the first few years of the system's life. It represented one of the longest and most important parts of my own career. A few things surprised me, like how closely the Famicom Disk System and PC Engine came out. It's just like my own life, I guess… the first 20 years are the longest time in your life. After those 20 years, it all seems to go by so fast… and the exhibit captures the spirit of the time that's so important for all of us involved in the industry.

Now that I'm over 50, when I look back and see the games all lined up in chronological order, I get very nostalgic. What also struck me is how strangely quiet the exhibit is. In the past, when we were trying to exhibit so many games, it was always so hot and noisy. With the technology of flat-screen panels and special speakers for the game displays in the museum, it's so quiet and beautifully presented. It's surprising and such a change from the past.

NGC: And what do you see for yourself, personally, in the future?

Shigsy: My children are now 17 and 18 years old. Soon they'll be off to college, then after about five years or so they'll be assuming their places in the workforce. I sometimes wonder what I'll do when they're gone. So far, my priority has been to be a family person. But they'll be leaving soon, so I need to think about what I'm going to be doing after that.

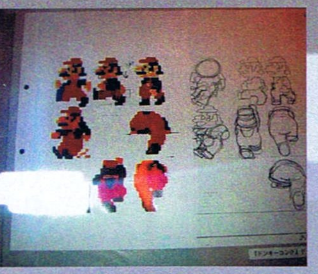
NGC: We saw Yuji Naka recently, and he asked us to relay the message that he'd love to hear you play the guitar…

Shigsy: Oh! He is talking about the concerts I gave recently, isn't he? You should tell him he should have come to one of my performances. (*Laughs.*)

One thing I've been doing nowadays is practicing musical instruments. I was in a garage band back in college, and I've given concert hall performances. My wife sings sometimes, so maybe she'll join me in a band. It's my secret mission! (*Laughs.*)

At Nintendo, I don't see anything changing drastically in the near future. I might leave Nintendo to retire someday. I have to consider what I'll be doing when that day comes. Of course, when I challenge myself to do something new, that's always fun. About five years ago, I started a garden, and two years ago I got a puppy. I loved the experience of training the puppy and watching it grow. And at home, I study music. I made a personal music studio in my garage, all by myself. I also made a big kennel for the dog. I love those sorts of DIY projects. Making things with my own hands has always fascinated me.

NGC: Mr Miyamoto, sorry, *Shigsy*, thank you very much for your time.



△ From smooth sketches to primitive pixellation, and a star is born.



△ Miyamoto-san's biography, as on show at the Famicom exhibition.

DID YOU KNOW? Want a piece of Miyamoto wisdom? "A delayed game is eventually good, a bad game is bad forever." Deep…


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NGC THE VERDICT YOU DESERVE!

REVIEWS



MGS: THE TWIN SNAKES

He may be the king of stealth, but we're not letting Solid Snake creep onto Gamecube without making a fuss. P40



WARNING! SPOILERS AHOY! OUR REVIEWS CONTAIN SENSITIVE INFO!



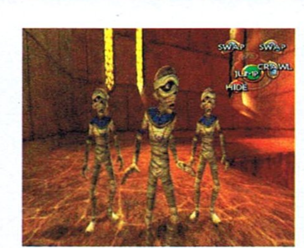
JAMES BOND 007 EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

Everything you want from Bond: the stars of the current films, fast cars, big bangs and top totty. Some things never go out of style. P54



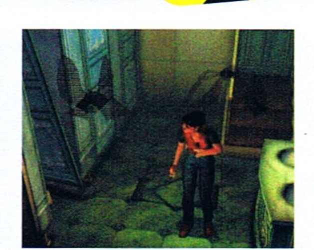
SONIC HEROES

Hedgehogs are not, by nature pack animals. Nor, for that matter, do they hang out with foxes. Down with Sonic, we say. It's all unnatural and no good will come of it, you mark our words. P62



SPHINX AND THE CURSED MUMMY

Sphinx may be the hero, but pounding, chopping and incinerating the Mummy is where you'll have the most fun. That's if your sense of humour doesn't *desert* you. P64



RESIDENT EVIL CODE VERONICA X

Rivalling *Metal Gear Solid* for the Golden Tortoise Tardy Conversion award, this is a port of an old – but none too shabby – Dreamcast game. Still, zombies can wait. P66

ALSO REVIEWED

HOW IT WORKS...

Our reviews are the most comprehensive on Earth. We devote more pages to the games you want to know about, and give you loads of detail. We don't rest until we've played a game enough to pinpoint ALL of its strengths and weaknesses, and be able to deliver the most honest, no-nonsense verdicts around.



HARVEST MOON

'A Wonderful Life'? It certainly is. Enjoy the great outdoors, manly pursuits like horseriding and, erm, milking, and chasing the ladies of the village (blood relationship not required.) P48



FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES

You'll need extra Gameboys and connectors, but it's worth splashing out on *Crystal*. P58

OUR SCORING SYSTEM

0-24

Crushingly awful, massively dull. Rest assured, this is crud.

25-49

Disappointing, stashed with faults and likely to be short on any quality.

50-74

Some great bits, some not-so-great bits. Decent but definitely problems.

75-89

Great fun, brilliantly programmed at times, but probably flawed.

90+

NGC STAR GAME

Rarely awarded, you'll know a 90+ is essential. Buy with confidence...

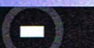
THE SCORE BAR

The verdict explained for you...

PROS AND CONS

Because we think it's important to provide you with balanced reviews, we'll sum up the game simply with some plus and minus points.

+
- Lots of fresh air.
- Animals to look at.
- Plenty of food.
- Peaceful.

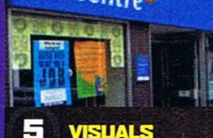


- Cow-pats.
- No shops for miles.
- Anything else-pats.
- Gets boring fast.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Not all games are good (unsurprisingly) – so you'll be wanting to know what the alternative is. We'll provide suggestions here.





VISUALS AND SOUNDS

Gamecube sends PS2 packing. Do the visuals and sounds show this?

MASTERY

How well does the game make use of the Cube's startling hardware?

LIFESPAN

Will it last you a lifetime or a couple of minutes? This is where you'll find out for sure...

5 VISUALS
Can see for miles. Miles and miles of brown fields. Hmm.

7 SOUNDS
Lots of birdsong, not much traffic and the occasional moo.

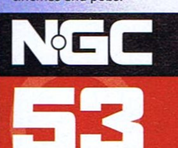
5 MASTERY
There's not enough going on to push the Gamecube hardware.

8 LIFESPAN
You'll probably live longer with less air pollution. Oo arr.

VERDICT

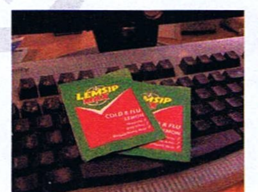
We don't throw scores around – we give a game what it deserves. Here you will find the definitive verdict as to whether you should bother purchasing a game.

VERDICT
Down On The Farm is fine for a few days, but you quickly long for things like shops, cinemas and pubs.



MEET THE NGC TEAM

Padding along quietly in the footsteps of Messrs. Bond and Snake...



MARCUS
Inspired by Otacon, Marcus decided to communicate with the team by Codec. As he's a mobile-scorning luddite, for 'Codec' read 'Post-Its'.



PAUL
Forget Snake, Bond is Paul's role model. He's even got a camper van that squirts oil all over the road. (What? It's not supposed to do that? Oh.)



KITTSY
Thinks stealth is pointless – who cares what the guards hear, they're still going to die. Snake has inspired him to kill. Everything inspires him to kill.



GERAINT
The Welsh Snake, he's skilled at hiding. Especially when work's being handed out. And he vanishes utterly when it's his turn to make the tea...



MIM
Can't be a hero because she's a girl, hah. It's a supporting role only for her. But she's let off bikini duty on lardiness grounds. Be thankful.



EFFY
Has no truck with any sort of espionage nonsense. And he's got no idea how the miniature camera and radio transmitter got into his house either.

SOLID GOLD

At long last *Metal Gear Solid* has come to a Nintendo console! Kittsy's so excited that he hadn't the heart to indulge in his monthly *Hitman 2* ritual of arranging corpses into rude words. See, he *has* got a heart, even if it's made of flinty stone.



INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	KONAMI
DEVELOPER	SILICON KNIGHTS
RELEASE DATE	26TH MARCH
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	5
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40

METAL GEAR SOLID

SPOILER ALERT! SENSITIVE GAME SECRETS REVEALED

THE TWIN SNAKES

Worthy of Nintendo or a six year-old rehash? We know the truth…

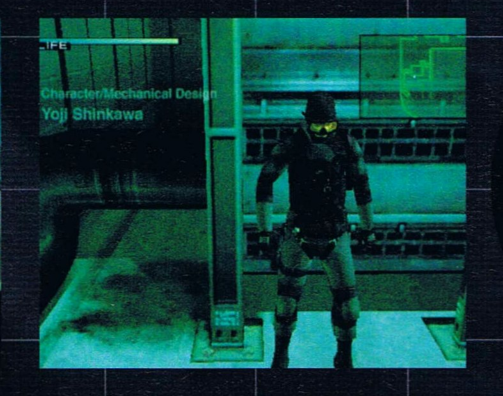








Kenneth Baker
(Allan Lurie)
You're the ArmsTech president, Kenneth Baker, right?



TURN OVER
For a *very* in-depth look at *The Twin Snakes*. But if you don't want to see the game's secrets stripped bare, just check the verdict bar on page 47.

"A comprehensive selection of briefing tapes"



PISTOL WHIPPED

Hold R to see your weapons, from your Socom pistol to missile launchers.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Hold down L to cycle through your non-offensive equipment. Items like health-giving ration packs will be a constant friend, but there are quirkier things to play with, like cardboard boxes.

SLIPPERY CUSTOMER

Tasked with infiltrating a terrorist base to rescue a high-ranking official, Solid Snake's a one-man army.

BAD GUYS, BAD NAMES

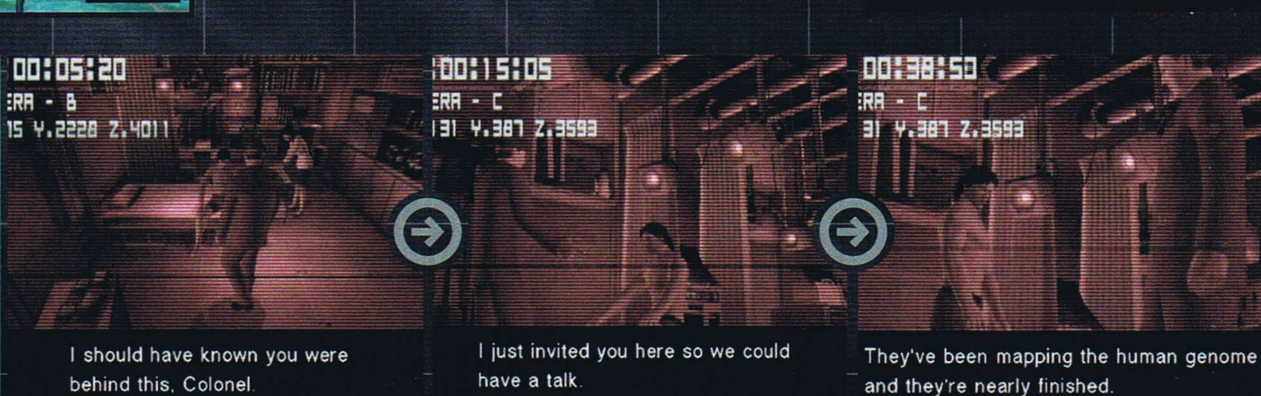
Head baddie is Liquid Snake. His henchmen are madly-monikered too – there's Revolver Ocelot, gimp Psycho Mantis, Vulcan Raven and Sniper Wolf.





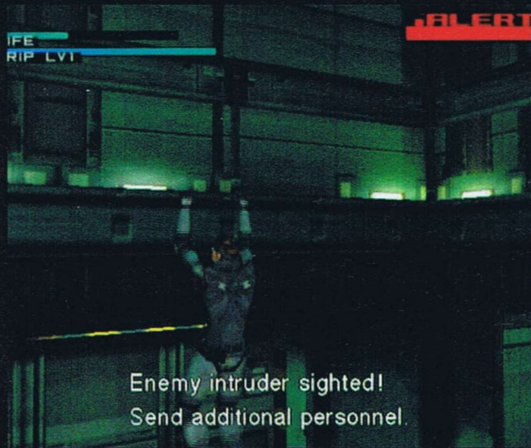
LET'S BE BRIEF

Confused by all this talk of Foxhound, Metal Gears and Shadow Moses? Don't be. There's a comprehensive selection of briefing tapes for you to view, showing videos of a dragged-out-of-retirement Snake getting injections and being told of the dreadful trouble the world is in. It's nicely scene-setting, if necessarily full of exposition, and you can even control the camera angle. Hurrah!



ELEMENTS OF STEALTH

Silicon Knights have implemented loads of gameplay from Metal Gear Solid 2. Let's take a closer look at what exactly you can do…



HANGING AROUND

Got goons running towards you? Tap Y to vault over a railing and hang by your fingertips, thus avoiding detection. An on-screen meter lets you know how long you can hang on for.



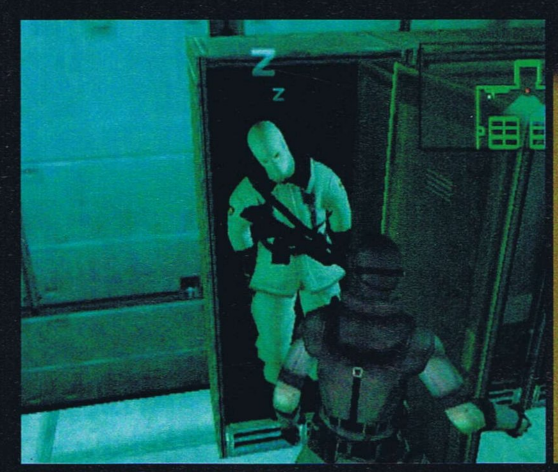
LOOKY HERE

Tap Z to enter first-person view, allowing you to aim accurately at enemies' heads. Headshots take guards down in a single shot. Nice. Unfortunately you can't move when in first-person view.



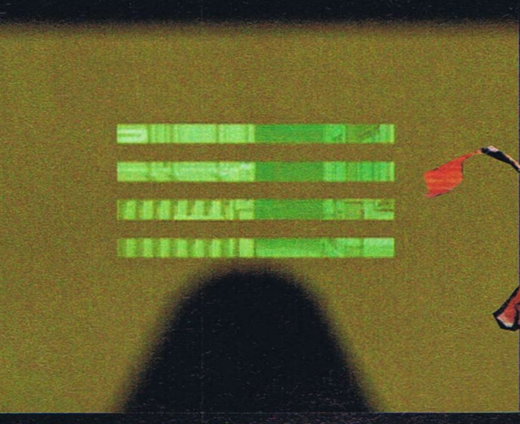
SHAKY WAKY

You're rewarded for knocking enemies out rather than killing 'em. You can pick up prone enemies by the legs and give them a shake so that they'll drop anything they're carrying.



HIDE AND SEEK

It's a good idea to hide neutralised guards – you can secrete them in nearby cubbyholes. Locate a locker, open it, and bundle the sleeping henchman inside, then softly shut the door. Nice.



HIDE AND SEEK PART 2

You can hide yourself too. The enemies' cunning AI means they'll track you down given the slightest evidence – such as footprints in the snow – so locking yourself in a locker gives you an edge.



GIRLIE MAG

The guards in MGS might be clever, but they're also just dumb men. Leave a magazine opened up at a lascivious page lying around and you'll catch their attention quick-sharp.



STICK 'EM UP!

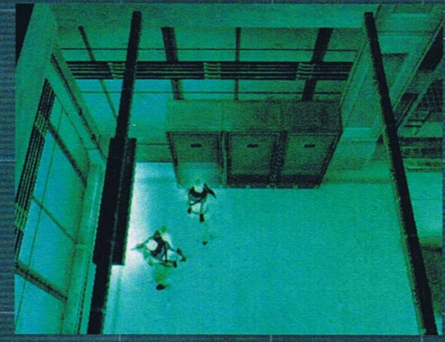
Train your weapon at a guard's family jewels and they'll shake in fear, eventually dropping an item.

"A startling amount of depth"




△ You can have literally hours of fun toying with the guards. But perhaps we're just cruel like that.




△ The guards will cleverly check inside lockers.

SNAKETIVITIES

It's not an easy life, being Solid Snake. Frankly, some of the things he's expected to do during the course of a regular working day are a little dangerous. Still, the girls love 'im.



At one point Snake gets captured and tortured by Revolver Ocelot (he's probably annoyed about his daft name). Hammer A to avoid being tortured to death.



When you're not being tortured by maniacs you're being shot at by military helicopters. Rappel down the side of this building and avoid dying. Easier said than done, really.



Your final encounter is with your nemesis and genetic clone Liquid Snake. You're both on jeeps and it's kill or be killed. 'Use the honking great machine gun' is our advice.



Prior to that, you'll face off with Liquid atop the remains of destroyed giant robot weapon of mass destruction Metal Gear Rex. It's a mano y mano fight. One for the ladies.

It's with real tears of gratitude that we herald the return of *Metal Gear Solid* to a Nintendo console. N64 had the all-conquering *GoldenEye* but PSone had an equivalent stealth-based classic in Hideo Kojima's tale of tactical espionage action. And so, while this comes perhaps several years too late, *Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes* proves to be nothing less than a brilliant game on Gamecube… even if it is all a bit familiar to *MGS* veterans.

The changes made here might initially disappoint said people – on the face of it, the game really isn't very different at all to what you might have played six years ago. Sure, it's had a next-gen lick of paint and certainly looks far better than it has any right to. It's not quite the miraculous eye-massaging transformation that *Resident Evil* underwent, but the character models here bear comparison with the wonderfully-rendered and splendidly fluid cast of the PS2's *Metal Gear Solid 2*, and basically it looks a hundred times better than it did originally (which is as it should be) even despite a few awkwardly jaggy PSone-style polygons.

MGS TOO

Aside from the graphical overhaul, though, it's the ripped-from-*MGS2* gameplay additions that offer the most interest, and it is here that *The Twin Snakes* really proves its worth. Approach the game with patience and inquisitiveness and these elements provide the game with a startling amount of depth. For instance, while it's entirely possible to slip through a level by looking at your radar and avoiding guards and cameras, perhaps offing a few with your pistol, there's so much more to see and do that simply completing a given level is only the half of it, and the stealth element of the game is as comprehensive as you want it to be.

Non-lethal takedowns provide a superb risk/reward mechanic – if you've taken the time to pad quietly up behind a bad guy and neutralise him, so much the better. You can shake unconscious bodies for freebies, for example, or enact a good old-fashioned stick-up. Poke a gun in someone's crotch and they'll put their hands up, trembling with understandable fear (meaning you can nick their dog tags – and collecting these unlocks goodies). Nevertheless, there's more caretaking to do with this kind of approach: dead bad guys simply evaporate, but you have to hide unconscious guards. They'll wake up eventually but the more immediate problem involves their comrades spotting their prone forms. Because of this it's essential to drag them into nearby lockers (which you can also hide in) or else secrete them in the

INVISIBLE MAN



Finish the game and you get to start again with some fancy extras. The best of these is the Stealth Suit, which, when activated, enshrouds Snake in Predator-style light-bending invisibility. It means you can walk right up to enemy guards, who'll be confused as to what's happening but won't pull weapons until they're utterly sure of what's going on, allowing you to go stealth-mental on their asses. Nicely!

METAL GEAR SOLID: TWIN SNAKES

Snappy sneaky Snaky snuff-fest



△ We're cheating a bit here as we've got the stealth suit equipped. You get given it when you've completed the game once, and it's brilliant for sneaking around in.



△ Man or… woman? Hmm. It's a tough call.



△ The first-person mode is a brilliant addition.



△ Locked in a cell, post-torture. But how to get out? Your cell-mate has expired and is starting to smell a little off. Not exactly the best situation to find yourself in.





BEST BITS

There are so many. The twisty-turny story is memorable and there are tons of gadgets to play around with, but we'll have to plump for a fairly general bit – the depth of the gameplay and the sheer freedom it gives you to sneak around and torture guards. Sheer brilliance.

shadows. Most of the time in *Metal Gear Solid* there's a consequence for your actions.

As you're an international superspy-type character there's a wealth of gadgets at your disposal to help in the stealth stakes. Cigarette smoke shows up invisible laser-traps (but, with faultless logic, saps your health); M9 tranquiliser guns help you to render guards comatose; and you can even hide inside cardboard boxes, although if your 'disguise' is too incongruous inquisitive henchmen will have a poke or a kick and uncover you. Indeed, the seemingly-astonishing AI of the other characters in the game shows perfectly why you need to sneak around; they're not stupid and they'll check out anything out of the ordinary. They're alert to loud footsteps and they'll even track your footprints, or follow your blood trail if you're badly wounded – you've got to pay attention and literally cover your tracks. *Metal Gear Solid* is about so much more than keeping in the shadows or out of enemy guards' field of vision. Hell, you can even hang off ledges if you've got nowhere else to go.

"AS YOU'RE AN INTERNATIONAL SUPERSPY-TYPE CHARACTER, THERE'S A WEALTH OF GADGETS AT YOUR DISPOSAL"

REPTILE BRAIN

It's this remarkable attention to detail that makes the game so enjoyable, and as such, to get the most out of the title you've got to make an effort to experiment and do more than simply get from point A to point B. You'll find that you'll probably leave this kind of activity for your second run through the game as there's still a fair bit to occupy your attention on an initial play (and once you've completed the game you get given a Predator-style stealth suit which helps in toying around with enemy guards). Slipping into the *Metal Gear Solid* mindset also takes a little effort, and you'll die frequently before you realise that shooting your way through the game won't work, which can be frustrating if you've backed yourself into a corner. And this brings us, inevitably, to all those cut-scenes.

SNAKING LIBERTIES

Metal Gear Solid tells a brilliant story. It's at least as preoccupied with characters



BOSS BROS



One of the unlockable extras is Boss mode. Simply put, this mode allows you to fight the bosses sequentially, one-by-one, without any of that irritating playing-the-game business. It's more of a high-score type game rather than anything else – although it does help you hone your skills.

TURN OVER

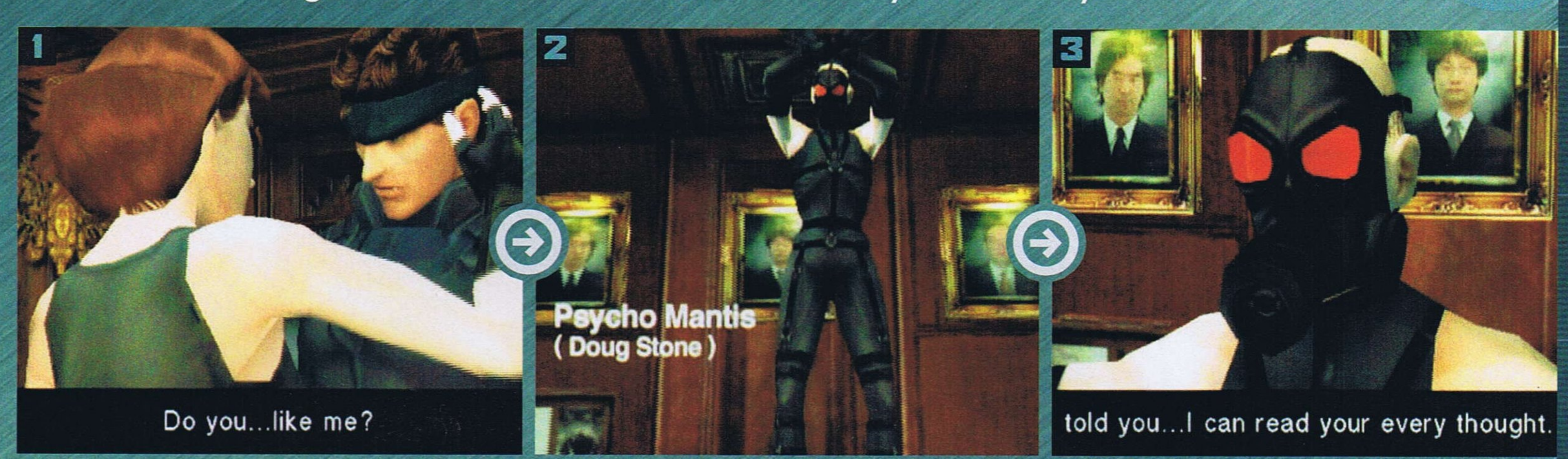
To see how much fun you can have torturing guards, and how much fun Psycho Mantis wants to have with *you*.



DID YOU KNOW? In the room where you fight Ninja, some Nintendo-specific objects are on a desk. Shoot them and see what happens…

PSYCHO KILLER

The most disturbing boss in The Twin Snakes is the frankly hideous Psycho Mantis. He's horrible.



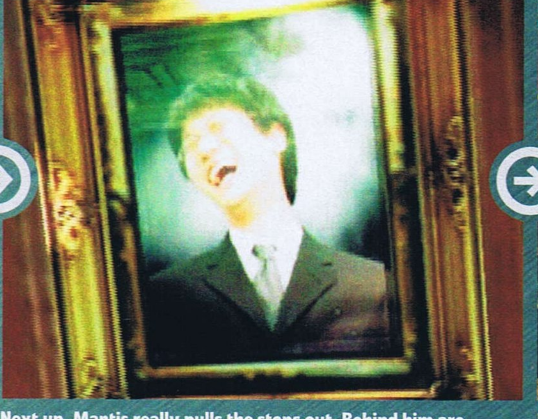
Just prior to the big fight, your hapless companion Meryl goes a bit mental and gets a little fruity. It's the insidious influence of the evil Psycho Mantis! He's a nasty man.

Look, there he is. Why would the world's premier psychokinetic and telepathic expert wear a gas mask and gimp suit? Because he's a nutter, plainly. Time to kill him. Horribly.

In a clever piece of gaming post-modernism, Psycho Mantis claims that he is able to read your mind. But what does he really mean by this?



Well, he means your Gamecube's mind. Stick your controller on the floor and he'll activate its rumble function. Like, spooky! Sort of.



Next up, Mantis really pulls the stops out. Behind him are portraits of important folk from Nintendo and Konami, including Hideo Kojima. Mantis makes them go mental.



Finally you'll get to fight him. He levitates all sorts of objects to use as weapons, but cleverly you can put your controller into port two to stop him 'reading' your actions...



△ Revolver Ocelot and Liquid Snake. Gits.



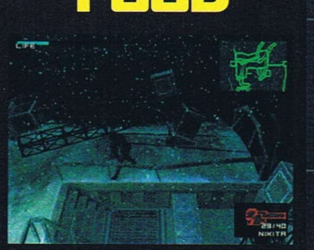
△ Not doing much guarding, is he? Best shoot him in the head, really.

and their relationships and Big Themes (in this case, genetics, fate and what gets passed on from father to son) as it is with the ins and outs of hardcore espionage. It's fascinating, and the characters are vividly brought to virtual life with some splendid voice-acting, but it can, and does, get in the way of playing the game. Hero Solid Snake has a Codec (a radio device through which he's contacted by allies) and you're constantly interrupted by transmissions. Much of the time – hints aside – it's interesting, but the constant pausing for soap opera-esque discussions of life and love in the middle of a world-saving mission does get farcical. The longer action scenes tend to be diluted by such moments and Konami's habit of showing you things rather than letting you play gets irritating, and the cut-scenes can go on and on... and on. Nonetheless, only the most curmudgeonly churl could deny the game's cinematic scope. It really is like being in a film at times, and *MGS* veterans will be in rapture at finding an hour's rejigged cut-scenery here, along with an updated script.

SO SOLID TWO

Aside from a surfeit of story, really the only other downsides are the questionable lifespan (if you don't savour it you can rush through it) and the surplus of bosses. They're hugely characterful but, as with *Metroid Prime*, these efforts to add

FROZEN FOOD



Health top-ups in *MGS* are called, rationally, rations. Get 'em equipped and you'll automatically use one when your health runs out (handy, that). And in another example of the game's magnificent attention to detail, they'll freeze up if you're outside, meaning you can't use them. By equipping them – so they're 'next to your skin', as the game has it – they'll thaw out after a while.

METAL GEAR SOLID: TWIN SNAKES

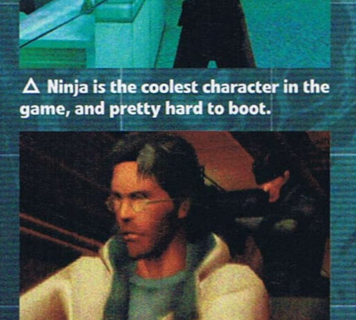
Snappy sneaky Snaky snuff-fest

A HENCHMAN'S LIFE

It's no fun being a grunt in the employ of terrorists. *MGS* allows you to torture them in entertaining ways. Haha! Etc.



△ If you're in first-person mode when you die, the 'screen' cracks.

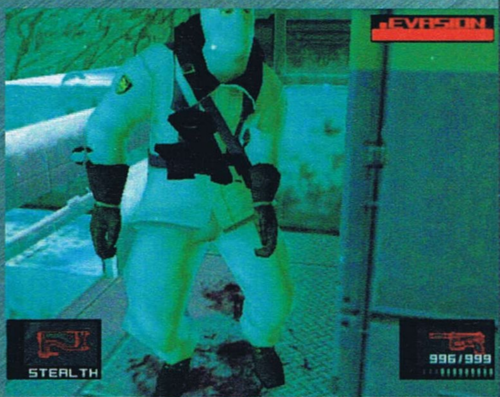
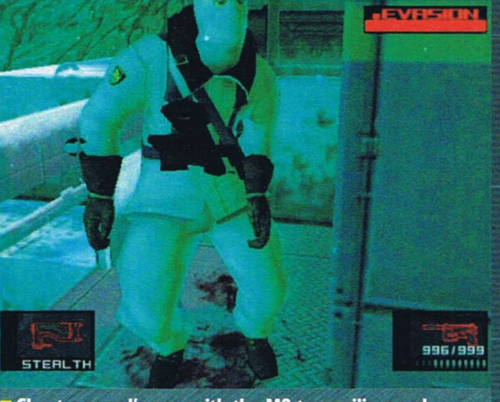


△ Ninja is the coolest character in the game, and pretty hard to boot.

△ Otacon is Snake's geeky tech-buddy, a bit like a young, nerdy Q.



■ Hold up a guard and pop a cap in his leg. He'll try to stand up and will wobble all over the place. Excellent.

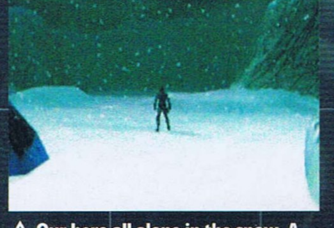



■ Shoot a guard's arm with the M9 tranquiliser and you'll paralyse it. It twitches feebly before he passes out.

■ While he's standing there, hands aloft in fear, place a piece of C4 at his feet. He'll discover if men can fly.



■ Or plug the fool in the head. Do it with the M9 and you can keep on doing so, splashing the area with claret.



△ Our hero all alone in the snow. A big tank will appear in a moment…



△ You can't control the camera but can look around in first-person view.



△ Sniper Wolf is another boss. She's beautiful but, like, deadly. Mmm.



△ Fighting Ninja in an office. He has a nasty habit of somersaulting.

more action sometimes detract from the excellence elsewhere. Otherwise, this will be familiar to those who played the original *Metal Gear*, but the new gameplay additions offer a flexibility that was simply missing first time around. And it's for these mechanics that *The Twin Snakes* will ultimately be seen as a far superior game to its original incarnation. *Metal Gear* newcomers, on the other hand, have a marvellous world of discovery ahead of them. We envy you your first time with *Metal Gear Solid* – there's lots to enjoy.

Silicon Knights have done a fantastic job rejigging the game for Nintendo's console. It looks great, and the bits that have been bolted on from *MGS2* have been seamlessly integrated. We're disappointed at the relative lack of extras – where are all the training-style VR missions that PSone owners got? – but the game really can't be taken to task for this.

> **"NEW GAMEPLAY ADDITIONS OFFER A FLEXIBILITY THAT WAS SIMPLY MISSING FROM THE GAME FIRST TIME AROUND"**

In the end, it's as absorbing and exciting a game as we've played recently and, along with *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*, it ensures that 2004 has started with a bang for Gamecube. Let's hope there are more Konami/Nintendo collaborations on the way...

JES BICKHAM



△ More first-person shootoutery. Enemies will go down with a single headshot.



■ Astonishingly deep stealth action.
■ Superb story.
■ Atmospheric.



■ Very looooong cut-scenes.
■ Perhaps too short.
■ Too many bosses.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Hitman 2
Eidos
NGC/82 91%
Astonishingly freeform assassination sim. Sheer brilliance all the way.



8 VISUALS
Wonderfully updated from PSone, but you can see the joins.

8 SOUNDS
Excellent voice-acting, sound and music throughout.

7 MASTERY
A six-year-old game but buttressed with extra gameplay.

8 LIFESPAN
Technically brief, but you'll want to revisit it time and again.

VERDICT

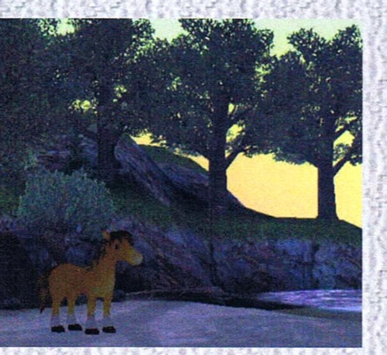
Not the wholesale re-imagining some were expecting but this is nonetheless a fine achievement and, crucially, day-wastingly fun.





DID YOU KNOW? *Metal Gear Solid* appeared originally on the NES many years ago, and there was an excellent Game Boy Color version out in 2000 which is worth hunting down.

"The surefire antidote to all known forms of Jaded Gamer Syndrome"



△ We didn't know whether to name the horse Epona or Ruud.



△ To be sure! It's a blast from the past for long-time readers of the magazine – Geary's dad!



△ You can stop anyone for a quick chat, but unless you're friends they won't say much.



△ That's Flora, from the excavation site. She isn't the marrying type (she lives with the Prof).



PUBLISHER	UBI SOFT
DEVELOPER	NATSUME
RELEASE DATE	19TH MARCH
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	47
GBA LINK-UP	YES
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40

HARVEST MOON A WONDERFUL LIFE

Roll up your sleeves and get stuck into the game that's a school, a job and a load of fun.

△ Shearing Flossie, our new sheep. Are you really supposed to do this in the winter?

Fed up with ordinary games? Tired of shooting things? Can't muster the will to go find Object A then swap it for Thing B, which you need to get Item X, in another mind-numbingly dull piece of silicon tedium? Sounds like you're in need of a therapeutic dose of *Harvest Moon*, the surefire antidote to all known forms of Jaded Gamer Syndrome.

If you're one of the many who spent the frustrating hours required to get the import-only *Harvest Moon 64* working on a UK N64, you'll know exactly what we're talking about. You might even have ordered a couple of copies of this Gamecube sequel – one

NGC STAR GAME

△ It's nice just to take a stroll around the village and enjoy the evening sights.



△ Twin firework makers live in that hut. They're virtually impossible to tell apart.



△ Look, we found a lizard with a bandage on its foot. Some kind of omen?



△ That distant pathway leads to Mineral Town, but only the other characters can go there.



△ If you've nothing better to do, break out the sickle and harvest some fodder.



△ A village bar with big city prices.



△ One day we'll have a house like this one.

to play and one to hang in a frame on the wall, in honour of whoever it was who decided to make sure UK Nintendo fans got a chance to sample the best game in the series to date.

Like previous versions, the aim is to word hard enough to turn a plot of bare earth into a thriving farm, while taking time out to form relationships with the locals and eventually marry one of a selection of likely ladies.

Harvest Moon: A Wonderful Life adds a whole new level of involvement and character interaction to what has long been a deep, characterful sort of game.

This time your farm is at the centre of a constantly moving world, reminiscent of *Zelda: Majora's Mask*. Each inhabitant has a set routine on certain days, and part of the fun is knowing when to abandon your duties as a man-of-the-soil in favour of following somebody around, seeing exactly what they get up to. For future reference, rather than the sneaky thrill of stalking.

Time passes slowly when you have nothing much to do, and whizzes by when you're up to your ears in chores. If you bite off more than you can chew



"FORM RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE LOCALS AND EVENTUALLY MARRY ONE OF A SELECTION OF LADIES"



SHADY LANE

The seasons change with a gradual transition over the last couple of days of each 10-day cycle. It's a beautiful effect, as is the regular transition from day to night. You don't need to water the crops when it's dark, and they seem to take a bit longer to dry up in the winter. Some seasons have high rainfall too, so there might be a few days when you're completely free of watering duties. Keep watching the skies.

DID YOU KNOW? Single versions of *Harvest Moon* have appeared on SNES, N64, PlayStation and PS2 in the past, but the leading format is Game Boy/GBA, which has now had five *HM* titles.



"It's all about starting small to build big"

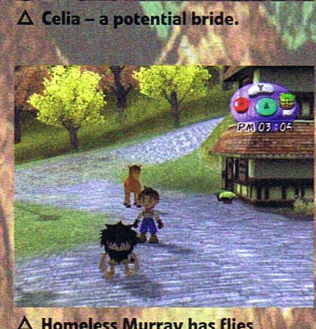




△ Strolling with the thoroughly miserable Nami.



△ There are all sorts of problems associated with growing crops. You need to plant in the correct season, water them so they're a decent quality, and decide whether to sell them or make recipes.



△ Celia – a potential bride.



△ Homeless Murray has flies buzzing around his unwashed face.

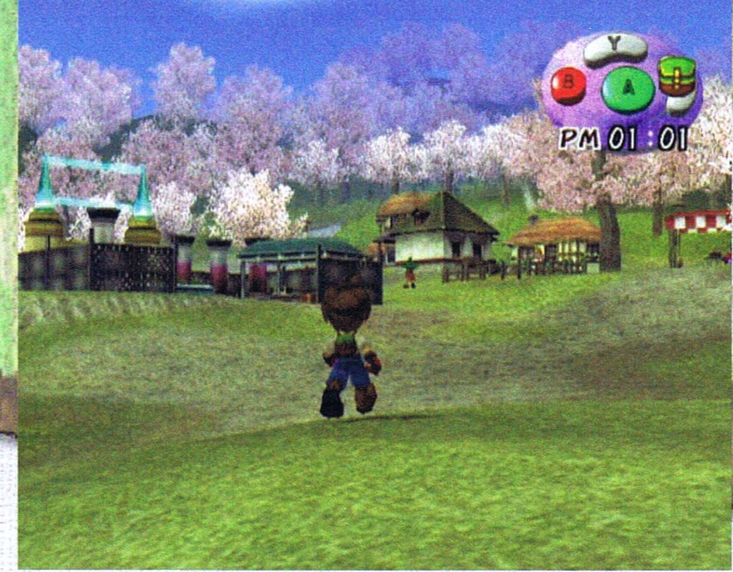
△ There's not much chance of Romana lasting the entire game.



△ Yes, Muffy – daddy's here. Now let's get you indoors, away from that scary old dog.



△ Night fishing underneath the cherry blossoms makes a pleasant end to the day.



△ That's a large portion of Forget-Me-Not Valley. To the left you'll see Daryl's laboratory; straight ahead, the bar, a couple of private houses and Van's stall.



SPECIAL BREW

In a radical departure from HM's usual happy theme, Murray is a flea-ridden tramp who hovers at the edge of society. Nobody seems to notice him, and when he's not begging for change or getting plastered at the bar, he can wander with impunity into places such as Romana's posh villa. Sadly there's no 'punch in the face' button.

early on in the game, you'll find your poor farmer physically unable to keep up with all the work. There aren't enough hours in the day, let alone enough strength in his puny body. It's all about starting small to build big, see. At the beginning of the game you're given a cow to milk and a few rusty old tools to cultivate the land. There are three veggie plots available, with different grades of soil, and you have enough cash to buy a few bags of seeds from a neighbouring farm. With these modest resources you must attempt to grow as many valuable crops as possible. You sell what you don't eat and use the money to trade up to better tools, more animals and assorted objects of farming desire.

Watering the plants is the single most time-consuming activity, as it has to be done twice a day. While you're worrying about letting your tomatoes dry up, you have to remember that the animals all need regular care and attention. It's a balancing act that can prove to be quite



"SELL WHAT YOU DON'T EAT AND USE THE MONEY TO TRADE UP TO BETTER TOOLS, ANIMALS AND OBJECTS OF FARMING DESIRE"

HOME ON THE RANGE

A year is a long time in farming (or about 10 hours of game time). See how young Jethro goes from clueless innocent to new daddy in 16 easy steps…

GETTING STARTED



With a friend like Takakura, you can't go wrong. He bought our Jethro a brand-new cow, which was most welcome, and a dog, which Jethro elected to steer well clear of.

Takakura knows absolutely everyone in the village. Swift introductions were made, and this flirty young barmaid called Muffy soon caught Jethro's eye.

But before a young farmer can think of romance, he has to get his house in order. There's a whole lot of empty land and a distinct lack of crops on this farm.

After a couple of false starts and one failed harvest (Jethro was busy, okay) success at last. This day will forever be known as Tomato Day. Praise the Lord.

HARD GRAFT



In all the excitement, Jethro forgets to eat. Nowhere in town actually sells food, and his own crops are too valuable to consume. He lives on milk for six months.

Desperately hungry, Jethro sacrifices some tomatoes and forest herbs to make tasty soup. The resulting foul brew makes him double up with stomach cramps.

In his malnourished state Jethro is unable to tend his crops without keeling over, exhausted. He is spared death when he catches (and eats raw) his first fish.

With a ready supply of nutritious (free) fish, our hero can concentrate on wooing the lovely Muffy. She's a bit disturbed, but the best bet out of all the local ladies.

LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL



Jethro spends his spare time helping out at an archaeological dig. When the site owner isn't looking he pockets trinkets to win Muffy's affections. It works a treat…

Muffy hides her diary in a flower pot at the bar where she lives. It's obvious she wants it to be read, and it's all about Jethro anyway. Things are going great.

In the meantime, Big J amuses himself by taking leisurely walks on the beach while wearing a smug, self-satisfied grin. Well, he has every right to. Life is easy.

Jethro even finds himself an object of desire for the rest of the village girls. One at a time please, no pushing – you'll all get your turn. Being a farmer rules!

MUFFY BY MOONLIGHT



But just look at that twinkle in her eyes. The girl is besotted, naturally, and Jethro must have the decency to wait until after the wedding before he starts cheating.

And so the big day arrives. The bar owner seems unusually pleased to be getting rid of the girl. Jethro reckons it's all a brave front. There'll be tears when she's gone.

The villagers offer the couple their best wishes. Cash would be preferable. Even Mukumuku, the forest monster, wishes them a hearty 'mo-faaa'. Same to you!

The morning after, our hero awakens not to the sound of cattle mooing, but to the hellish shrieks of a screaming mini-Jethro. Muffy, what have you done to him!

"Going to be occupying an awful lot of your real-world time"

FARM SWEET FARM

As well as a comfortable little farmhouse to sleep in, you get a tool shed, animal barns and a building for storing or shipping food. Compared to previous HM games, your farm is spacious.

BUTTONS

The controls change according to what you're doing or holding. You have a main action button, a 'special' action button, one to access your inventory and one for cancelling menu choices.

ANIMAL MAGIC

When the weather is good you can let your animals roam the pasture. Saves having to feed them. Cows, sheep, goats and ducks go in this main area, with chickens kept in a separate barn. Get yourself a bull and you might find your bovine population increases all on its own.

GREEN FINGERS

This field is for growing fodder for your animals. Dotted around it are three smaller fields, with varying levels of fertility, for crops. You might as well stick to the largest, most fertile one – watering all three will take hours out of your day.

FREEBIES

Why try growing more crops than you can handle, when there's big money to be made from the things you pull out of the water or the ground? Collect everything, sell big fish, and you'll be on your way to a respectable pile of cash.



daunting at first, but you soon get a feel for the job and exactly what's required.

Just as well, because the marriage aspect of the RPG, which has been prominent but not 100% essential in most previous *Harvest Moon* titles, is particularly important in *A Wonderful Life*. And you're not going to get the best out of it if all you do is work.

The game is divided into six chapters which span your farmer's entire life until he's an old man with grown-up children. By our reckoning the whole thing will take around 100 hours to see, and obviously it's essential to the storyline that your farmer gets hitched at some point in time.

So to avoid simply being allocated a random spouse, you'll have to pick one from three potential candidates. This involves a lot of roaming the village, finding out when and where they hang out, and whether you think they have the right personality to make a life-mate for your farmer – not to mention whether you want them playing a central role in a story that's going to be occupying an awful lot of your real-world time over the next few weeks.

"TO AVOID SIMPLY BEING ALLOCATED A RANDOM SPOUSE YOU'LL HAVE TO PICK ONE FROM THREE POTENTIAL CANDIDATES"

Once you've found the one you think will be the most fun to live with, you have to woo her with whatever presents she'll find most impressive. After a while she'll develop a serious crush (you can check this by peeking in her diary) and eventually the time will be right to propose.

Not only do you have to bring gifts to the girls, you can also try making friends with the other residents of your home village, in the peaceful surroundings of Forget-Me-Not Valley. They'll all be able to offer something useful, interesting or just plain entertaining as the game progresses, but you'll be hard pressed to please every one of them.

It's packed full of things to do. The scenery is fantastic, and you'll need to



CARRY-ALL

There's no need to keep swapping items in your inventory, as you can carry up to 350 at a time. In the unlikely event of running out of rucksack space it's possible to store thousands of items on a magic shelf in the tool shed, and a few hundred more in the refrigerator next to the dairy shipping bin. There's no way you'll use up all those slots.

STRANGE PHENOMENA

Odd happenings in Forget-Me-Not Valley…



HARVEST SPRITES

As ever, a gang of 'little people' live in a grotto near the farm. Eat a magic mushroom and you'll be teleported into their fungal domain.



BEHIND YOU…

High comedy, this. Mad scientist Daryl spends much of his time trying to catch Mukumuku, a bizarre creature that roams the forest muttering 'mo-faaa'.



TELLY ADDICT

The valley has the weirdest text-based TV programmes in history. This one features the immolation of an unlucky reporter, while the host cackles like a madman.




WITHOUT A CARE

Show even the slightest interest and the locals will unload their most personal troubles on you. Owning a farm must put you in a position of extreme trust.



△ **Weird plants light the way to the Harvest Sprites' grotto. There's good fishing here.**



△ **In Nami's room – there's not much time to explore before she chucks Jethro out.**





△ **Items can be switched using this menu. If you've got too many in your rucksack it'll be faster to sort through them on a separate screen. You can group together commonly used items for easy access.**

take a good look around every day to spot the latest changes – wild plants may have sprouted, new items may have appeared, or characters might have returned from a trip to Mineral Town, as featured in the GBA version.

The two games offer link-up options such as transferring character profiles and music tracks, and while hardly essential, it's a nice bonus feature.

To be honest, we haven't bothered with the link-up all that much because *A Wonderful Life* has proved more than big enough to have eaten up untold hours of our days and evenings all on its own. We'd rather spend the time fishing for valuable Sharsharks, which fetch a huge price at the market, or persuading Romeo, the reluctant bull, to help provide us with yet another calf to nurture. There's still a bit of space in the animal shed, see. On top of that, there are numerous recipes to get the hang of – ways to combine food items, either to please villagers who are fans of home cooking, or to sell for a slightly better price than the raw ingredients. You can even combine seeds after a certain point in the game, to attempt a bit of plant hybridisation. Who knows what bizarre new veggies you'll come up with…

Basically there's far more to the game than we can possibly cover in a review. It feels like a living, breathing world, and it plays like nothing else.

The only real problem is that it requires such a huge commitment of time and energy, some people may be put off after minor failures in the early stages. When that first hard-grown crop fails to bring the expected reward, expensive new equipment seems an impossibly long way off. That's when you'll either knuckle down and make sure you work a bit harder in future, or decide it's all too much like having a real job, reset the console, and play something vacuous and undemanding instead. Good luck to you.

As you've probably gathered by now, we reckon *Harvest Moon* is the best thing since carrot seeds and baby cows. It requires an awful lot of effort before you feel like you're really getting anywhere with it, but then the result is so much sweeter for the knowledge that it's entirely your own sweat and toil that made everything just so.

Not convinced? Stick with ordinary games, by all means. When you're ready for it, *Harvest Moon* will be there to restore your faith in innovation, originality and the power of imagination. It's absolutely wonderful.

MARTIN KITTS

THE HARD SELL

The only things you can ship out for sale in Mineral Town are dairy products. Other items such as fish and vegetables can be sold by pitching a stall next to the inn. Wandering villagers will buy individual items at negotiable prices. To sell in bulk you'll need to wait until Van, the local merchant, shows up with his regular travelling market.

+

- Hugely rewarding.
- Lasts ages.
- Run whatever kind of farm you like.

–

- A lot of hard work to begin with.
- Repetitive if you don't mix it up.

IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Animal Crossing
Nintendo
NGC/74 90%
Marvellous slice of artificial life and neighbourly good deeds. Import only.



8 VISUALS
Excellent. Would have scored better but for some minor glitches.

6 SOUNDS
Doesn't seem to do a great deal. Functional and lively, though.

9 MASTERY
There aren't enough hours in the day to see everything here.

9 LIFESPAN
You could conceivably play through three times. It'll take months.

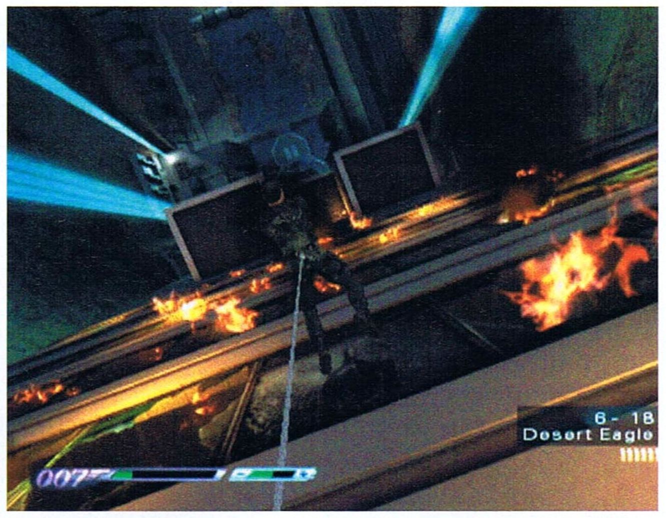
VERDICT

A magical experience you're never likely to forget, and the best game in a series that's never been less than excellent. An essential buy on Gamecube.





△ Relaxing in a post-Bond Moment state of bliss. Ahh, that's the good stuff.



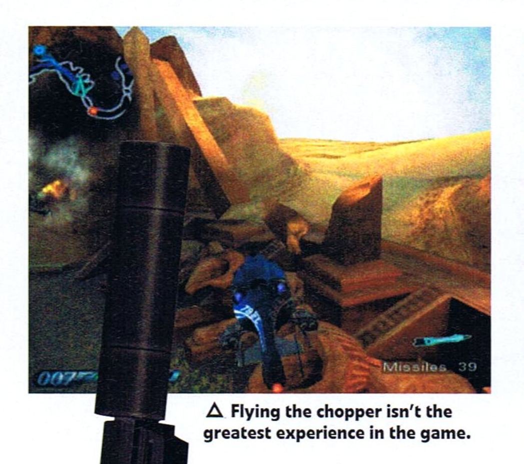
△ Men with guns chase after you in this abseiling scene. Outrun them, 007.

INFO BURST

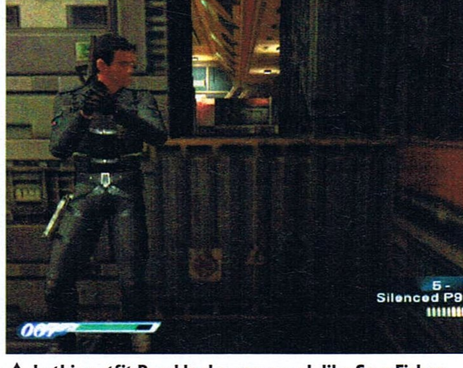
PUBLISHER	EA
DEVELOPER	EA
RELEASE DATE	27TH FEB
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	5
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	YES
COST	£40

JAMES BOND 007 EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

Bond is back, but can we write an entire review without mentioning the G-word?



△ Flying the chopper isn't the greatest experience in the game.



△ In this outfit Bond looks very much like Sam Fisher from *Splinter Cell*. Coincidence? Or conspiracy?!



Poor old 007. His films haven't been all that consistent since Sean Connery retired, and his games haven't been anything special since… since… well, since *you-know-what*.

He's clearly in need of a makeover, so rather than churn out another inferior rehash of *(cough, cough, ahem)* with a few rubbish driving sections tacked on, EA have taken a entirely new approach. Consequently this one is a bit like a fast-paced shoot-'em-up version of *Splinter Cell*, with those rubbish driving sections tacked on.

Apart from giving the developers a chance to show off their disturbingly realistic Pierce Brosnan model, there's no reason why the third-person viewpoint shouldn't work brilliantly in a 007 game. Unfortunately it's scuppered by a camera and targeting system that's fiddly enough to have cursed Her Maj's finest secret agent with more unfair deaths than we've been able to count.

Unlike the older first-person Bond games, you can't simply look around and shoot at whatever you want. You have to move the camera using the C-stick, which doesn't actually make Bond aim at anything in particular, and hope that when you press the left trigger he'll lock on to the appropriate target.

When you've got one enemy shooting at Bond's back, a couple more chucking grenades from the wings and another rapelling down from the rafters, the control system is thoroughly inadequate. Something as intelligent as

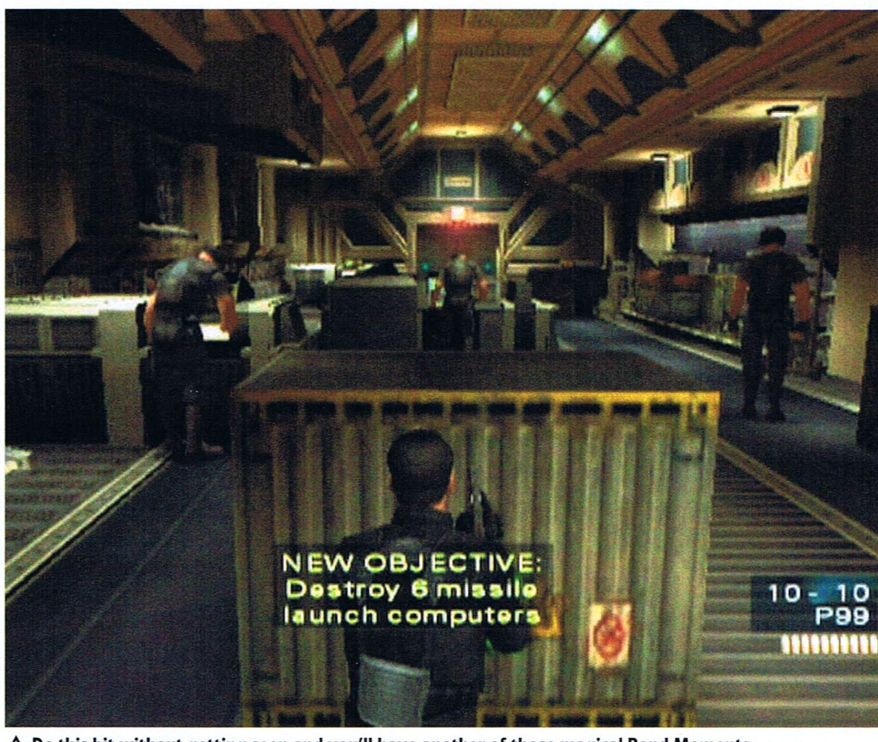


△ That's right, 007 – shoot him in the arse for England! It's what you went to Oxford for…


△ Press the Z-button to sidle against a wall and then target someone to jump out.



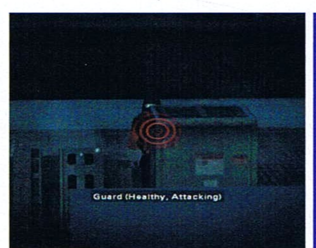
△ Bond gives Jaws an electrifying experience. He'll be back, of course.



△ Do this bit without getting seen and you'll have another of those magical Bond Moments.

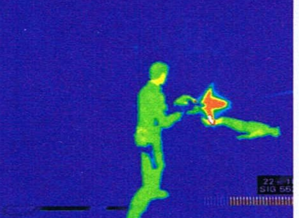
BE CAREFUL 007...

Don't damage these gadgets (except the ones that are built into your own head).



BOND SENSE

In what is doubtless a nod to Chris Morris, we're talking Bondsense. Pause the game and 007 can scan the area using his superhero powers.



THERMAL VISION

Step over a certain line and the lights go out. Step back and they turn on again. John Cleese advises that this is the ideal time to use thermal vision.



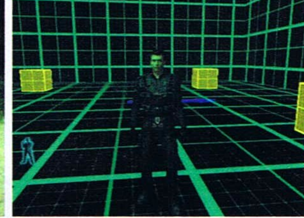
SPIDER MAN

Bond's little spider gizmo is like the one in Turok Evolution, except it can't spew poison gas that makes people puke. It can pick up items though.



SUPER CAR

James Bond's Porsche people carrier comes equipped with machine guns and rockets. It can also turn invisible for a brief period, which is handy.



VIRTUAL BOND

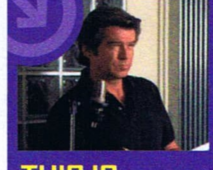
Bizarrely, the training area is some kind of virtual reality thing rather than a realistic building. James must jack himself in, like in The Matrix.

the lock-on targeting from *Metroid Prime* would have been most welcome.

The game does mix up its action admirably well. It all begins with a pre-credits spot of blasting, Bond running around toting an *Unreal*-style rocket launcher, before moving on to driving sequences, semi-stealthy bits, helicopter battles, on-rails shooting… The levels are short and speedy, and the first time you play, you'll never know what to expect next.

You also never know when you're going to get totally violated by one dismal design 'quirk' or another. It could be a soldier who must have ran around the outside of the entire level in order to get behind Bond and shoot from where he can't be targeted; it could be an enemy with the ability to see through walls; or a time limit failed on one of the driving bits because you have to position Bond in exactly the right position before he'll get in his car. The one thing you can rely on is that you'll have to keep repeating the same scenes over and over, because you're thrown right back to the start whenever you get stuck on that fatal bit of scenery or attempt

> "IT ALL BEGINS WITH A SPOT OF BLASTING, BOND RUNNING AROUND TOTING AN UNREAL-STYLE ROCKET LAUNCHER"



THIS IS HOLLYWOOD

Electronic Arts went overboard to make this game feel as close as possible to a proper Bond movie. They commissioned a special theme song, hired some of the regular actors from the films, and even got Willem Dafoe to play the part of the bad guy. Shame they couldn't design a save menu that used fewer than eight button presses. Ouch.



△ He's a big man but he's out of shape. With Bond it's a full-time job. Now behave, you metal-mouthed lump of lard. How very 007.

"Something about it has kept us coming back"



THE BOND MOMENT

Finding hidden areas or going off the beaten track (where allowed) makes a 007 logo flash up. It's called a 'Bond Moment', which is the most ridiculous name they could have come up with. What are you supposed to do after having a Bond Moment? Bask in the glory? Rush to the bathroom? You are Bond, so surely even making a cup of tea is a Bond Moment. One Moment involves massaging a lady. Yay!



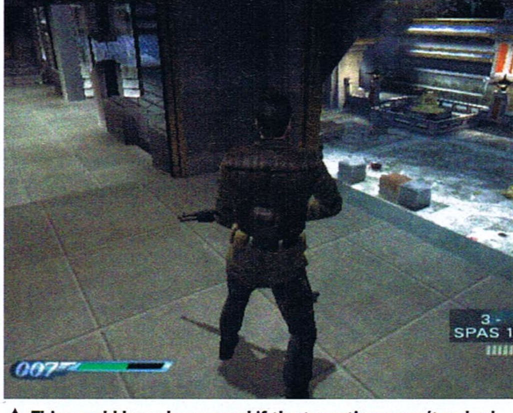


△ **This giant platform exists to protect one chopper.**



△ **Neck go snappy-snap! Bond like when windpipe go crush! Hee hee. Bond go kill next man with metal pipe.**





△ **This would have been good if the targeting wasn't so bad.**

GO BUNGEE!

Bond can't jump over things but he can certainly jump off them. Run over the edge of a building and as long as there isn't a protective kerb he'll abseil off the side, attached by a special rope. Sometimes the bad guys follow him down, which can be annoying when you're trying to do some extreme sports.

to drive down a road where vandals have removed the street sign marked 'instant death'.

All the layers of flashy presentation in the world can't disguise the fact that this game is fundamentally flawed. There's enjoyment to be had out of it, for sure – something about it has kept us coming back for another go, half an hour after throwing down the pad in a fit of crap-design-induced pique. But it isn't something you're ever likely to play 'to death' despite the wealth of unlockable extras and extra objectives on the harder difficulty levels.

If there's any consolation to be had from this patchy effort, at least the developers are trying to do something new. Maybe the next one will be the *thingy*-beater Electronic Arts keep promising us.

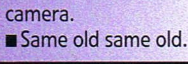
MARTIN KITTS



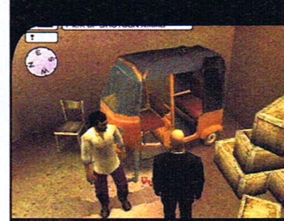
- Famous faces.
- Speedy action.
- Varied locations.
- Fairly Bond-ish.



- Heavily scripted.
- Wild and crazy camera.
- Same old same old.



Hitman 2
Eidos
NGC/82 91%
If only James Bond were more like this. Less random killing and a whole lot more intelligence.



7 VISUALS
Lots of detail at the expense of a smooth frame rate. You pays your money…

8 SOUNDS
Authentic Bond music and voices from proper movie actors. Nice work.

5 MASTERY
It's reasonably good from a technical point of view. Gameplay? Pah.

7 LIFESPAN
Multiplayer modes and two-player co-op. If only it were more fun.

VERDICT

Barely above average, it's only 007's winning personality that makes the game more than just another dull movie tie-in – and it isn't even based on a movie at all.







△ Two friends, three GBAs and leads. What's missing?..

△ ...Ah yes. That's what else we need. Never fear, though, because *Crystal Chronicles* is drenched in the stuff.

FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES

Four players, five screens. *FF* never used to be this complicated...

INFO BURST	
PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
DEVELOPER	SQUARE ENIX
RELEASE DATE	11TH MARCH
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	22
GBA LINK-UP	YES
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	YES
COST	£40

And... rest. *Final Fantasy* has finally come home. After deserting Nintendo for the charms of Sony, SquareEnix has come back to where it all began.

This isn't *Final Fantasy* as you know it, however. There's no crisis, for a start. No crazed Duke in an airship, determined to rule the world. Instead, *Crystal Chronicles* takes you to a world where the atmosphere is choked by a cloud called the miasma. Anyone who comes into contact with it is slowly killed, so villages survive by

DOT TO SLOT
These dots set your attack type. Use the L and R triggers to cycle through attack, defend, magic and items. You can collect more slots, making more complex attacks possible.

PUSHING UP DAISIES
Once you're dead, you're helpless – other than being able to give a sarky wave to your teammates. You can't carry the chalice or use your inventory, until someone steps in with a Life spell or Phoenix Down.

CRYSTAL BALLS
These glowing orbs are magic spells. They look and act a lot like sparkling footballs. If you're on a steep hill, they can roll away out of the protection of your bubble, and some brave warrior will have to make a dash to rescue them.

MYSTIC PINT
The crystal chalice protects your team from the miasma. In a big fight, the carrier can always drop it to join in the shoeing, but watch that you don't all get trapped in an awkward corner.

ABSENT FRIEND
When you're in GBA mode, your picture will be covered with a GBA icon, letting other players know you won't be much use in a fight. If your battery runs dry, you can switch off and swap mid-game.

HOME ON THE RANGE
At home, you can stock up on supplies, trade patterns for weapons, and even check up on your cow. If you send seeds home while you're away, your family will give you free fruit and veg when you visit.









erecting huge crystals, which project a huge dome that repels the miasma. The crystals must be replenished yearly with drops of myrrh, which can only be collected from trees hidden in remote corners of the world. And that's where you, three of your friends and a funny blue elephant thing come in.

> **"IN MULTIPLAYER MODE, THE ONLY WAY OF CONTROLLING THE GAME IS VIA GBAS AND LINK CABLES"**

You set off, searching for myrrh to top up your village's crystal. You collect drops of myrrh in a crystal chalice, which projects a mini safety-bubble for you to travel around inside. You can play as a duo, a trio or a quartet, but whatever the combination, one player must carry the chalice and the others must remain inside its circle of safety. It's a clever way of ensuring everyone stays on-screen, but being the chalice bearer isn't easy. It slows you down, and you'll need to rely on your friends to protect you while your hands are busy.

But while your characters run around on screen, you'll notice that there's little to get in their way in terms of menus. That's because everything is tucked away on your GBA. In multiplayer mode, the only way of controlling the game is via GBAs and link cables, and the GBA screen displays your map, stats and equipment, so if you want to do a little housekeeping, your friends don't have to wait for you. As soon as you go into Menu mode, your character is automatically tugged along by the crystal's bubble. You can forget about the main screen, since if you take any damage your GBA's screen will give a panicky little shake to alert you. It's a smart idea, and one that works well.

ONE IS FUN
Let's get one thing clear: *FF:CC* is fine as a single-player game. And when there's only one of you, you control the game with a joypad, not a GBA. It's not designed to be played this way, but it's still a satisfying experience. SquareEnix have made sure the dungeons easier to compensate for your lack of back-up, but you'll feel like a hero when you've fought through them all alone. There's the odd switch puzzle that's a bit frustrating as

FAMILY TIES
Each player must choose a race and a family profession. This governs your starting abilities, and the kind of equipment you can use. Your family will send you letters and presents at the end of each dungeon, and you can visit them at home to buy clothes, weapons and supplies depending on whether they're tailors, blacksmiths or merchants.

DID YOU KNOW? Miasma comes from a Greek word meaning 'stinky'. (*My ass, ma – Ed.*)

"Pile in and pummel him with sticks"



△ **Obsessed? *Final Fantasy* die-hards will *swoon* to see Phoenix Downs and tackle Tonberries.**

△ **Your caravan moves between dungeons across a huge map. Each year, rivers dry and mountain passes close, limiting your destinations.**

a solo act, but there's no reason to miss out on *FF:CC* just because the multiplayer isn't a possibility for you.

The dungeons range from caves to giant mushroom forests, but the pattern in each is pretty much the same. Your team has to explore, solve puzzles to unlock doors and annihilate every monster it feels brave enough to handle. There's no random battling, nor the turn-based line-dancing of other *Final Fantasy* games. On first glimpsing an enemy you can choose whether to run or pile in and pummel him with sticks. As well as simple combos, you can charge up your weapon to produce a reticle that you can use to target explosive ranged attacks.

Enemies you kill leave treasure, but also something more valuable: magic orbs. Unlike most titles, *FF:CC's* magic system is temporary. You start each dungeon with nothing, and must find an orb for each spell before you can use it. If all four players want to have Cure, then you'll need to find four Cure orbs, and any that you do find will vanish when you leave the dungeon. From a handful of spell orbs, it's possible to create the flamboyant attacks that *Final Fantasy* is famous for. The process is different in single and multiplayer (single players merge orbs in their menus, team players must aim their reticules at the same point), but the sums are the same. Fire + Fire = Fira, Life + Thunder = Holy. The decisions about how to combine your orbs are complex and can make or break your progress through a level. The random way they're dropped, however, can be frustrating – especially

GOOGLE

Search every nook and cranny for hidden moogle burrows and these fuzzy little wonders will stamp your moogle card for you. Find enough matching stamps and you'll unlock a mini-game. Be warned, though. These can only be played in multiplayer mode, and you'll have to trek back to the moogle's house to play them.

GROWING PAINS

An RPG without any EXP? Don't SquareEnix know their acronyms?









UP? AWAY!

Don't expect to see 'Level UP!!!' on your screen. There are hardly any numbers in FF:CC. You get stronger by collecting artefacts that boost your stats.

EARN YOUR REWARD

In each dungeon, you earn artefacts by following a personal rule, which is displayed on your GBA – Don't Use Magic, say, or Open All Treasure Chests.

FINAL JUDGEMENT

Once you've beaten the boss, scores are awarded for how well you've followed your rule. It's slightly unfair, since some rules are harder to follow than others.

ESPECIALLY FOR YOU

After all that, you pick your artefact – only one, from the ones that are suitable to your race. It's permanently added to your character, and you can't swap it.



Overlapping your target reticles lets your team unleash enormous spells.



You'll need to align your chalice to pass through the terrifying miasma streams.



In towns you can visit blacksmiths and have weapons and armour made. You'll need to find patterns for new kit hidden in dungeons and collect or buy the right raw materials or the blacksmith won't be able to help.

if you struggle on for hours without finding a Cure.

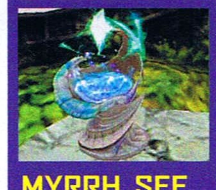
Even if you do struggle, you're unlikely to be bored. *FF:CC* could well be the most beautiful game ever made for the Cube. Combined with the music and the understated way the story evolves as you embark on your yearly journeys, the looks make the world one you will never forget once you've visited it.

This is an extraordinarily ambitious game. An attempt to redefine how people play together, and some startling fresh and flexible thinking from a franchise that some people thought was running out of steam. As a consequence, it's not without its problems. The order in which you pick up spells is too random, and it can lead to you wasting hours of precious four-player, eight-battery play. The camera, which you'll mostly forget even exists, occasionally makes things awkward, particularly in the boss battles. And some players will find the protective bubble a little claustrophobic, since it slows them down and limits where they can go. Bosses can be frustrating to fight, and if they prove too tough for your team you'll simply have to quit the level and lose all your progress.

"STARTLING FRESH AND FLEXIBLE THINKING FROM A FRANCHISE THAT SOME PEOPLE THOUGHT WAS RUNNING OUT OF STEAM"

These are the kinds of little criticism that most good games shrug off easily. But *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles* isn't most games. It asks you to spend hundreds of pounds on peripheral equipment, and forces you to abandon nice fat analogue stick for a cramped D-pad, and that means that even little problems loom pretty large. This is a game that asks a lot from you, and so you expect it to treat you like a princess in return. When it doesn't, it can be a kick in the teeth. Those teeth, though, will be in a mouth that's smiling and laughing, that's gasping with wonder and screeching instructions at its friends, and that's the best recommendation any game can have.

MARGARET ROBERTSON



MYRRH, SEE

Myrrh trees can only be harvested every two years, so you'll need to plan your routes to revisit areas you've beaten before. When you return, new areas will have opened up, and the enemies will be bigger and badder than before. Bosses in particular will be a much taller order, and you'll need to plan your strategy well in advance.

+

- Gobstopping beauty.
- Team spirit.
- No random battles.

–

- Hassle getting people together.
- Expense.
- More hassle.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Phantasy Star Online
Atari
NGC/78 90%
Online monster-bashing with beauty, atmosphere and camaraderie.



9 VISUALS

This is Gamecube at its gleaming, sumptuous best.



9 SOUNDS

The tunes are a delight, but the panpipes will grate.

7 MASTERY

It's ambitious, so a few clumsy design choices are on show.



8 LIFESPAN

You can play this for as long as your friends still like you.

VERDICT

It's not flawless, but once you're working as a team, there's nothing to touch it. This is gaming at its most boisterous and beautiful.

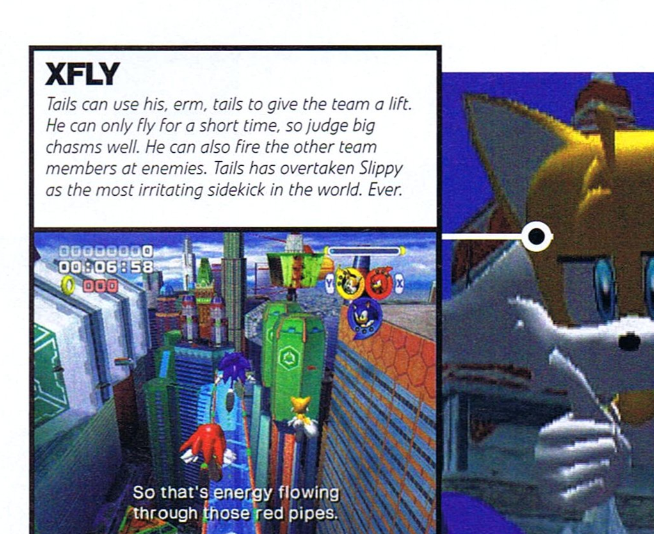




DID YOU KNOW? *Crystal Chronicles* will be sold with a free link cable – but only while stocks last, so get yours quick!

XFLY

Tails can use his, erm, tails to give the team a lift. He can only fly for a short time, so judge big chasms well. He can also fire the other team members at enemies. Tails has overtaken Slippy as the most irritating sidekick in the world. Ever.



POWER

Knuckles is the man for this. He can smash blocks, often opening hidden bumpers to score better level times. Also good against strong enemies.

That's all! You did great!

SPEED

Sonic's main trait is the best choice for places where there are loops and long stretches. He has a spin attack too.



SONIC HEROES

A new 3D Sonic, another **woefully** inadequate platformer…

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	SEGA
DEVELOPER	SONIC TEAM
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1-2
MEMORY CARD PAGES	2
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



Yeah, we know what you're going to say. "You hate *Sonic* – you're just biased, blah, blah." And, yes, sometimes we do seem to have an irrational dislike of the bushpig. Still, the fact is that if *Heroes* were a better game it would get a better score. Unfortunately, while Sega have changed gameplay elements (you now control a team of three characters), they've failed to address many of the problems that have plagued *Sonic* since it made the move to 3D.

Okay, so the game has some good points. The formation and skill system that requires you to change team leader on the fly is smart, and it opens up scope for replaying levels in order to perfect a run, plus having four teams to choose from will give *Sonic* fans value for money. But ultimately, it's still a flaw-ridden shallow experience.

Irritating controls that fluctuate between feeling too thick on some occasions and too fussy on others can be extremely annoying; the camera, again, is all too often responsible for breaking the flow of play; and, even more of a let-down, most of the game lacks challenge. Another disappointing underachiever then.

GERAINT EVANS



△ *Sigh*… Well, at least the old ring chime sounds exactly the same…



- Smart team-work mechanics.
- It's fast and very colourful.



- Niggly controls.
- Pretty shallow.
- Tails' stupid face and hateful voice…

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Billy Hatcher
Sonic Team
NGC/87 86%
Sonic Team CAN make a decent platformer – and *Billy Hatcher* proves it.



6 VISUALS

It's pretty speedy, but it's hardly a work of art. Disappointing.



6 SOUNDS

You'll like it so much better when Tails just SHUTS THE HELL UP.

5 MASTERY

Camera: not good enough. Controls: not tight enough. Poor.

7 LIFESPAN

Enjoyable in two-player, and Challenge mode will run and run.

VERDICT

Isn't awful, it's just we want much more from *Sonic* – and time and time again it doesn't deliver. Entertaining in places, then, but never particularly thrilling.





DID YOU KNOW? Contrary to popular belief, we don't actually *hate Sonic*. It's just that we remember a time when *Sonic* games were, you know, actually quite good…

SPAWN ARMAGEDDON

Hellspawn comic character in 'perfectly average videogame' shocker…



Spawnsy, as he's known to his mates.

Out with the cape.

Here's a game that plays quite a lot like the PS2 title *Devil May Cry*, but is nowhere near as good. And when you consider that *Devil May Cry* isn't all that much cop anyway, it's odd that anyone would want to copy it.

As the titular demonic hero, it's your job to deal justice to the forces of even-worse-evil-than-yourself, while looking stylish in a raggedy red cape.

It's the standard lock-on/jumping fare you'll be familiar with if you've played things like *Blood Rayne* or (God forbid) *Batman Dark Tomorrow*. Enemies materialise in waves, and must be dispatched with shotgun, battle-axe or old-fashioned, luminous green magic. Objective achieved, you set about traversing city rooftops, among other urban locations, in search of the next fight.

It's competently done, despite coming from the same developer that brought us *The Scorpion King* (a rancid beat-'em-up adventure that copped 30% back in issue 75). The frame rate is a touch jerky and the camera as twitchy and unreliable as you'd expect from this sort of thing, but everything else works reasonably well.

The problem is that you're going to have to give up several hours of your precious time to play through it, a commitment that seems excessive when you consider how many more rewarding games are available for the same price.

Spawn fans, of which there can't be huge numbers outside the USA, will probably go nuts for this – it's the first remotely playable Spawn game, not counting the character's guest appearance in the Xbox version of *Soul Calibur 2*.

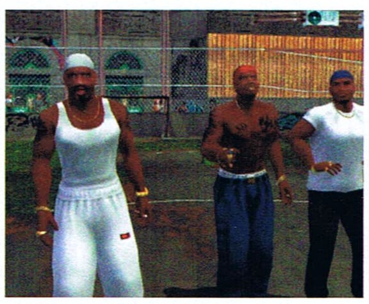
Everyone else, give it a try on rental, or save youself the hassle and play the more entertaining *Blood Rayne* instead.



Begone, foul demons. Have some justice.



INFO BURST	
FROM	NAMCO
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD	
PAGES	2
WIDESCREEN	YES
GBA LINK	NO
COST	£40



Yo, homies! Let's play some ball, eh?



Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear.



Don't be surprised if the game registers a goal when you've actually just hit the crossbar at 200mph or blasted the ball clean over the top. Keeps things interesting, doesn't it?

URBAN FREESTYLE SOCCER

Booya! Football goes street, in a run-down council estate of a game…



Street football – what a great concept. And in the hands of a competent developer it might one day make a decent game. But, to borrow the urban vernacular, this is definitely more 'ming' than 'bling'.

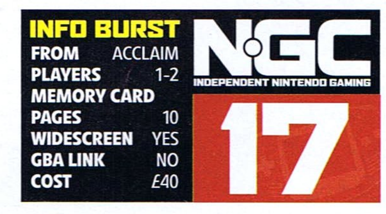
Quite simply, *Urban Freestyle* is broken. It doesn't work. It's a shoddy, half-finished effort that feels like it was shoved out of the door before anyone got the chance to add any playability.

You can score a cheap goal every time by running sideways until the goalie rushes out, then toe-poking into the empty net. Attempt something more spectacular and you might be awarded a goal anyway, even if the ball flies over or hits the crossbar.

The laws of physics don't apply. The ball picks up pace after rebounding off a wall; it hovers in front of the players' feet, moving without being touched; it flies into the air and soars out of the playing area, the camera helpfully focusing on the inside of a piece of scenery while you wait for the computer to realise nothing has happened for the last 10 seconds.

There's no point trying to pass the ball. The most reliable way to get into a goal-scoring position is to run directly up the pitch and hope you don't get crunched before you get your one-sided one-on-one with the keeper.

The characters are loathsome and the animation is terrible. There are worse games out there but this one represents a new low for Gamecube sports titles, and as such merits the following score:



INFO BURST	
FROM	ACCLAIM
PLAYERS	1-2
MEMORY CARD	
PAGES	10
WIDESCREEN	YES
GBA LINK	NO
COST	£40

"Spoiled by moments that bring both confusion and despair"

MONSTERS

You can use these to your advantage, by luring explosive enemies towards destructible objects and guiding 'Capture Beetles' towards weakened enemies.

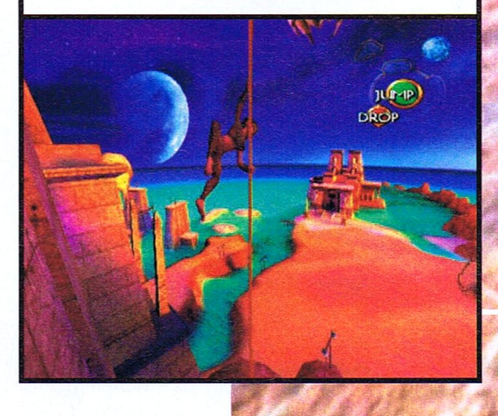
YOUR CHARACTER



You have two different characters. You can't choose when you want to control either one – instead, after every major event, you switch to the other character, who has his own set of skills and goals.

THE GAME WORLD

While lacking massive amounts of texture detail, some of the views you get can be lovely. The architecture is quite impressive on occasion, with huge structures to explore.

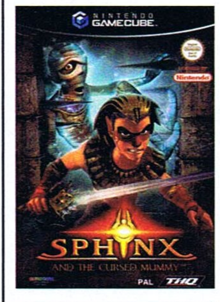


ACTION BUTTONS

Very much like in Zelda, you can assign certain items to specific buttons once you've collected them. These can be anything from your shield to a handy blow pipe. Also like in Zelda, you can increase your health quota as you progress.



PUBLISHER	EUROCOM
DEVELOPER	NEVERSOFT
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	20
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	YES
COST	£40



SPHINX AND THE CURSED MUMMY

A new breed of tomb raider unearths a whole world of pain…



Definitely one you need to stick with, *Sphinx* starts in the worst possible way: bland environments and some horrible, *horrible* design choices. One of your first tasks is to chuck a bunch of rocks at a tree to get a coconut. Done that? Okay, now do it twice more. Not satisfied with that? How about a tiny but immensely irritating platforming bit that, thanks to Sphinx's retarded jump, will have you plunging into lava time and time again? After an hour or so, we wouldn't blame you if you felt like digging out your receipt and heading back into town. But, like we said, you should stick with it. It does get better. Much better…

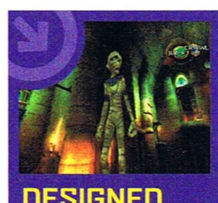
SPHINXO-PHRENIC

The game is essentially divided into two parts. You play as both Sphinx (a feline humanoid) and Prince Tut (who gets turned into the Mummy a little way through the game).

Sphinx is the classic hero of the pair. He can wield a sword, shield and blow-pipe as well as all manner of helpful items both for attacking and puzzle-solving. The Mummy, on the other hand, can't attack directly. His jump is limited too, although he does have a number of useful abilities. He can crawl and 'sneak', plus – thanks to the fact that he's already dead – he's invulnerable to environmental hazards like fire, electricity, crushers, whirling blades and so on. In fact, in a rather clever touch, the Mummy can use these hazards to his advantage. Setting himself on fire, for example, will allow him to burn wooden obstacles.

Gameplay frequently switches between the two characters at key points. While Sphinx gets to use his superior muscle for most of the action, the Mummy works through the more cerebral tasks. This blend of styles actually works rather well and, while the Sphinx's sections are arguably more enjoyable, the change of pace and, indeed, the humour offered by the Mummy's puzzles keeps things refreshingly varied.

Granted, the kinds of tasks on offer aren't consistently imaginative. There are plenty of generic switch and lever puzzles to trudge through and the game has more than its fair share of errand-boy chores that send you scuttling around the landscape, but at least you're frequently rewarded for your efforts. The game moves along at a fair old pace, and each time you have to slog through something that feels just a little tedious, you can guarantee



DESIGNED FOR STRIFE

For every good design decision, like pads that increase your running speed to take the pain out of travelling, there are plenty more that irritate, like needless platforming elements that only highlight the difficulty of precision jumping along with the tedious puzzles that force you to repeat tasks you've already proved yourself at. Aaaaargh.

SPHINX AND THE CURSED MUMMY

Walk, run, jump and fight like an Egyptian

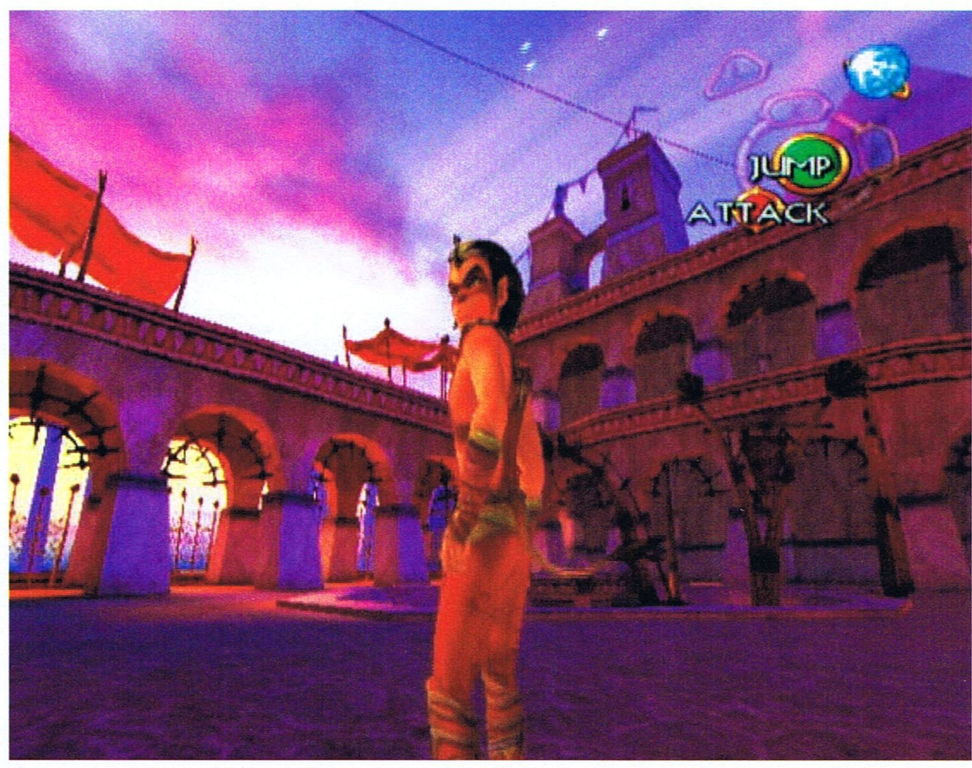


△ Use your blowpipe to hit the targets.



△ Level architecture is often very impressive – and it all runs smoothly.

△ This is Prince Tut, before his brother mummifies him on his birthday.



△ There a lovely sense of scale to many of the worlds, but the huge areas lead to a lot of aimless wandering.



- Big environments.
- Involving story and nice atmosphere.
- Innovative features.



- Very frustrating.
- Weak combat.
- The puzzles often lack focus.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Starfox Adventures
Rareware
NGC/74 72%
Another adventure with naff game design, but better in terms of polish.



DANCE OF THE DEAD

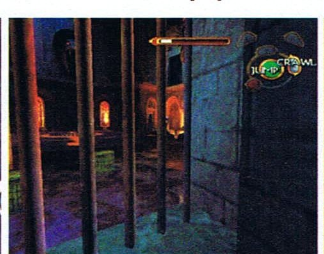
'Hilarious' slapstick action and self-inflicted Mummy punishment.



The Mummy character is dead, and locked away in a big tower-thing that wouldn't look out of place on the set of Lord of the Rings. He has no skills at all.



In order to solve problems, you can walk the Mummy into a hazards that give him temporary abilities. Catch fire, for example, to burn through wood…



…or use a crusher to flatten the Mummy out, allowing you to squeeze through bars that block important switches and such like. You can even use blades to…



…divide him into three. You can control each one in turn and use his other-selves to depress switches, allowing you to continue. Pretty clever stuff, that.

that a new area or skill will be available at the end of it.

GAWP LIKE AN EGYPTIAN

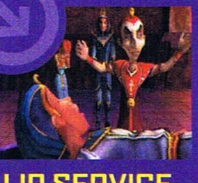
Visually it's no slouch either. While the opening stages aren't the prettiest we've ever seen, later locations – while lacking in texture detail – boast some rather nice architecture and are quite often grand in scale. Moreover the game runs incredibly smoothly, with rarely a dip in frame rate.

It's safe to say, then, that we really want to like *Sphinx*. The developers have clearly put in a great deal of effort to pepper the game with sweet little touches and innovative features, but unfortunately, those initial, irritating design faults *do* drag it down. Some of the platforming tasks are beyond a joke and watching Mummy or Sphinx stumble into the same pitfall time and time again is excruciatingly frustrating. Even more so when the game demands that, even after you've beaten them, you have to *replay* them a second time. The inclusion of an archaic 'lives' mechanic is also damning. Why present a player with a 'game over' screen before forcing them to trudge all the way back from their last save point – it's needlessly cruel and hampers the game's best feature: its wonderful sense of progression and journey.

Last, as nice as it is to have sprawling environments, they can all seem rather sparse when you're just wandering around wondering what the hell you're supposed to do next. There's often a lack of focus in certain parts of the game and it's easy to find yourself stumbling around hoping that a clue will present itself. The result of these seemingly-careless flaws is a game that promises to deliver a great deal on some occasions, only to be spoiled by moments that bring both confusion and despair.

And that's a real shame because, patience permitting, there's otherwise a great deal to admire here.

GERAINT EVANS



LIP SERVICE

In the game's cut-scenes you get subtitles to accompany the characters' mute lip movements. It's almost as though they decided to pull voice acting at the last minute. Its inclusion would have undoubtedly helped the overall feel of polish that the game's otherwise sound characterisation so desperately needed.

> **"WATCHING MUMMY OR SPHINX STUMBLE INTO A PITFALL TIME AND TIME AGAIN IS FRUSTRATING"**

7 VISUALS
Often bland, but huge environments and sense of scale save it.

7 SOUNDS
Decent enough effects and moody-but-forgettable tunes.

7 MASTERY
Very smooth and slick, but game design is sloppy.

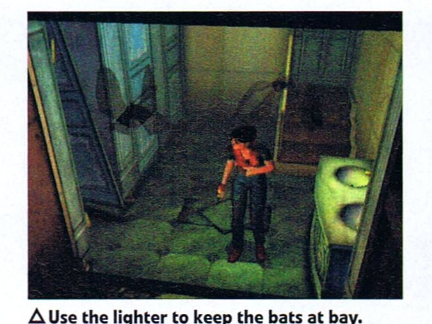
8 LIFESPAN
It's massive, with loads to explore, and it's no push-over either.

VERDICT

We *so* want to like it. It's inventive and atmospheric and it certainly has its moments, but frustration and silly design choices spoil it.

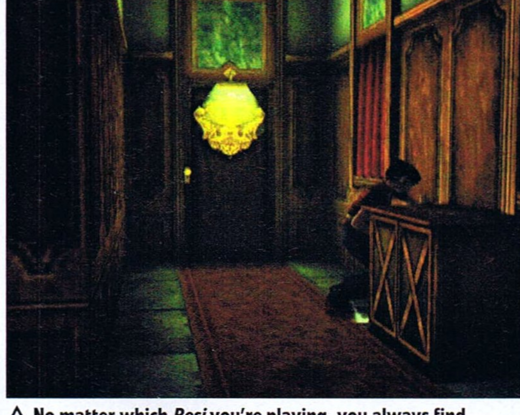





△ Use the lighter to keep the bats at bay.



△ You can rotate items for closer inspection.


△ No matter which *Resi* you're playing, you always find yourself pushing a chest of drawers around a mansion house.


△ It looks quite dated, but compared to *Resi 2* and *Nemesis* it holds up rather well. After a couple of hours, you'll be just as absorbed in this as you were in the Gamecube remake.



△ With practice, you can get pretty handy with the old knife, letting you save ammo for tougher enemies later on.

+
- Still a great survival horror game.
- Excellent story.
- Nice set-pieces.

−
- Just a straight port.
- Looks dated now.
- A no-no for non-*Resident Evil* fans

IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Resident Evil 0
Capcom
NGC/85 85%
Lovely looking horror adventure with smart two-character mechanic.

6 VISUALS
It looks like a Dreamcast game. Why could that be?

7 SOUNDS
Grrraaaargh, Mhuuunnnnhhh, Aaaaarrrch. *Nerk!* Etc.

5 MASTERY
An old game on a new(er) system. You figure it out...

7 LIFESPAN
A sizeable adventure, with little incentive to play through twice.

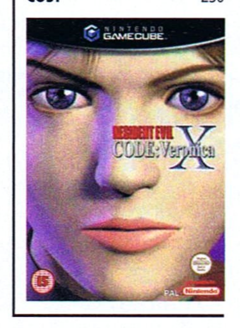
VERDICT
Still a good, solid adventure, but it's only worth it if you're interested in following the whole *Resident Evil* story – and if it's going cheap...

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING

70

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	CAPCOM
DEVELOPER	CAPCOM
RELEASE DATE	12TH MAR
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	6
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£30



RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA X

A little on the late side, but what the hell...

Let's not delay any further: you play the part of Claire Redfield – the younger sister of Chris – who's been banged up in some prison on a remote island. With the help of one of her captors, she escapes her prison cell and embarks on some classic *Resi* action.

Everything is as you'd expect. Green herbs give you a much needed health boost. Ammo for your handgun is in desperately short supply and around every corner there's a locked door or oddly shaped indentation that's just crying out for you to insert the matching key.

It's all familiar territory, except in *Veronica* you play through two different characters. You begin playing as Claire who, early in the game contacts Leon to ask her brother Chris to help rescue her. Half-way through the game, play switches to Chris, who sets off to help his sister. Regardless of the character, though, it all plays the same. Explore, solve puzzles and kill zombies.

When we first played this on Dreamcast we were dead impressed. For the first time it implemented 'proper' 3D backgrounds (albeit viewed through a restricted camera) and we applauded the quite lovely FMV throughout. Now, of course, things have moved on. *REmake* and *Zero* have upped the visual stakes, while *Resi 4* just looks too good to be true. A straight port of *Veronica*, then, wasn't exactly going to get our pulse racing.

> **"IT WON'T TAKE YOU LONG TO FORGET ABOUT THE DATED VISUALS AS YOU GET SUCKED INTO THE SEEDY ATMOSPHERE"**

Not everyone's played *Veronica*, though – and, despite its age, it still holds up pretty well, and it's by no means as painful an experience as playing through the Gamecube versions of *Resi 2* and *3*.

Most importantly, it's still solid *Resi* gaming – and it won't take long for you to forget about the slightly dated visuals as you get sucked into the seedy atmosphere. Perhaps its biggest draw, however, is the story. If all your *Resident Evil* experiences have been on Gamecube, and you've enjoyed them immensely, then you owe it to yourself to play through this, even if it's just to explore the *Resi* universe further and set yourself up for *Resi 4*. Just make sure you don't pay full price for it, eh.

GERAINT EVANS

△ And with one well-placed blob, the computer player was thoroughly messed up.





△ A screen full of transparent junk blobs.



△ Yeah, go go fever mode! Puzzletastic!

PUYO POP FEVER

Frantic puzzle fun from those mean bean-matchers at Sonic HQ.



On a novel twist to the standard puzzle formula, *Puyo Pop Fever* involves matching up coloured blobs. And get this – when you match a certain number, they disappear!

Cripes, there really are no limits to the innovative thinking at Sega. Seriously though, you can't knock a good puzzle game, and *Puyo Pop* has long been one of the very best.

Blobs fall in random configurations from the top of the screen. The instinctive thing to do, if you've never played *Puyo Pop* in one of its previous incarnations, is to match them up in groups of four and get rid of them as soon as they appear.



△ It goes all wibbly and 3D-o-rama.

But *Puyo Pop* is a lot more subtle than that. The knack is to pile the blobs high in special patterns, leaving a crucial gap somewhere so you can drop the right colour to start a massive chain reaction. Get it right and the whole thing tumbles down in a chaos of bursting blobs, clearing the screen and awarding amazing high scores. Get it wrong and you wind up being blasted by empty blobs from your opponent's side of the screen, which ruin your carefully laid patterns.

This *Puyo Pop* has 3D backgrounds, and the camera looks around them when you get chain reactions. There's a special Fever mode too, where you get loads of quickfire bonus screens all set up to be cleared with one well-placed drop.

It's also Sega's last ever Dreamcast game (yes, they still made them until now in Japan) but the Gamecube version is the best one. Loads of puzzling fun.

INFO BURST

FROM	SEGA
PLAYERS	1-2
MEMORY CARD	
PAGES	1
WIDESCREEN	NO
GBA LINK	NO
COST	£40

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING **80**

DRAGON'S LAIR 3D

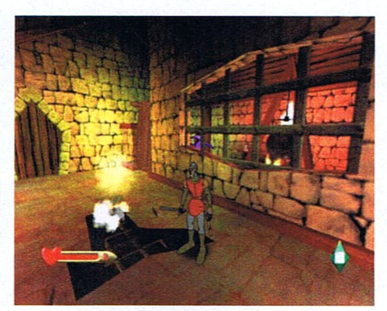
Back to the future and out with the nostalgia.



△ Ooh, it fair sets the giblets a-quivering. This scene was in the original arcade game.



△ Dirk is under that fireball, stone dead.



△ Where now? It's puzzle time, people.



How do you make a modern version of one of the most memorable coin-ops of the 1980s? Particularly when said coin-op's gameplay was just a tedious memory test for players to follow while they stared, slack-jawed, at the cartoon animation that streamed off the built-in laserdisc player?

The predictable answer is to turn it into a 3D platformer; one that can't possibly have the kind of wow factor that made the original so special. Sandwiched between *Pac-Man* and *Galaxian* in your local arcade, *Dragon's Lair* looked like a portal to the future. Next to *Metroid Prime* and *Mario Sunshine*, it just looks like any other piece of me-too cel-shading

Once more you play bungling knight Dirk the Daring, travelling through a trap-filled castle to rescue Princess Daphne from the evil dragon Singe. Instead of simply pressing a button at the right moment to activate a pre-recorded animation, you have to do a bit of jumping and fighting, using a lock-on target.

Vestiges of the unforgiving original remain – one false move and you die – and that simply doesn't cut it these days. The many scenes from the original which have been reproduced here will certainly twang the heart-strings of soft old retro fans, but the rest of the game isn't built very well at all. Dirk the Daring frequently falls off ledges and through tiny gaps, and the simple puzzles on offer are mostly just frustrating.

So at least it's true to its heritage in spirit. For nostalgia freaks only.



INFO BURST

FROM	THQ
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD	
PAGES	17
WIDESCREEN	NO
GBA LINK	NO
COST	£40

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING **48**

LINKY-DINK

You can connect both versions of *Harvest Moon* (Gamecube and GBA) to each other to unlock extra features. The more you play each game, the higher your connectivity level, allowing you access to recipes, records and gossip about all the characters from each of the games. It also makes more characters available to interact with.



Δ Take a well-earned break in the hot spa.



Δ Initially, your only source of cash is the honey in your garden and rocks in the mine.



Δ Buying chickens or a cow provides an extra stream of cash, through their eggs and milk (*Mmm, chicken milk* – Ed). You can breed them too.

NGC STAR GAME

HARVEST MOON
FRIENDS OF MINERAL TOWN

Fresh from the farm! A steaming dollop of digital agriculture.

It's one of those games that's so often overlooked by so many people – but for the few that do like to indulge in a bit of *Moon*, it can quickly become something of an obsession. It's strange when you think about it, because *Harvest Moon* is so tedious at times, especially when you're starting out; you feel as if you're always waiting for something to happen.

You are, of course. On arriving at your farm, you have very little money, and you're faced with a massive field that needs to be weeded. You have to smash up rocks to clear the land and chop up the lumber to make way for your crops. Once you've cleared the field and tilled the land into neat 'flower-beds', you can spend what little money you have on some bags of seeds to initiate your first crop. Once this is done, you have to look after them. This means watering your crops every day, and it's here that the game's first irritations can set in if you're an impatient gamer.

Initially, you can only water one 'square' of land at a time. This means a long and arduous task of walking up to a square and watering it, then walking to the next square and watering that, and so on. It's not exactly the most rivetting experience in the world it has to be said.

After a couple of days, your seeds will sprout and they'll develop over subsequent days (as long as you water them) into fruit or veg ready to ship out for cold, hard cash.

Once you get your first taste of money you'll feel a little overwhelmed by the choice of things to spend it on. You can buy chickens to get eggs (or to make more chickens if you want to hatch the eggs). You can buy different seeds to sow (all of which must be planted in specific seasons and have varying yields for your money). You can buy a cow for a supply of milk or, by mining in the local mountains, you can combine money and raw materials to upgrade your tools.

DIRTY HOES

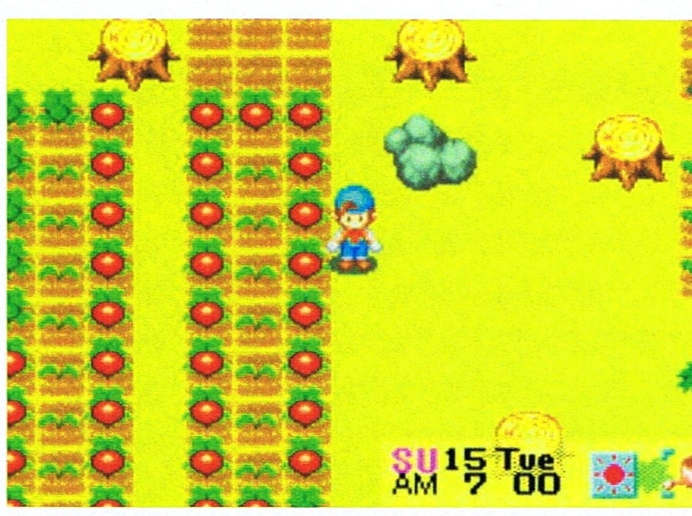
Thankfully, it's this latter option that eventually (say, after a good few hours hard graft) alleviates the game's tedium. You can upgrade your hoe, watering can, hammer and axe to chop bigger lumps of wood or cultivate more squares of land at a time, saving you time and your little man effort.

Once these labour saving devices have been earned, you'll find *Harvest Moon* truly blossoms. You see, the days are pretty





△ As you upgrade your watering can, you'll be able to water a bigger area in one go. Very handy that.



△ It's truly rewarding to wake up in the morning and find a crop ripe for picking.

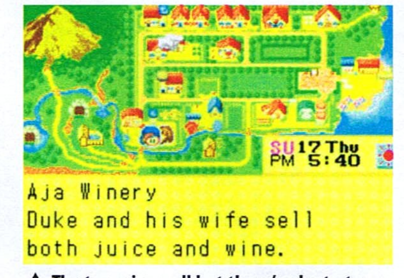


△ Taking flowers to the girl of your choice, will help heat up the old courting process. She loves 'em…



△ Shops are open on different days so you need to plan the week's activities ahead.

△ Get some rest – or you'll catch a cold.



△ The town is small but there's plenty to…



△ …occupy you between farming duties.



△ The chickens need to be happy to lay eggs.

short and, without better tools, you can spend all of your day tending your field of crops – forcing you to miss out on much of what the game has to offer. To begin with, you can keep animals. Chickens, cows, sheep, your horses and your trusty dog all need to be loved and looked after. It's not just cute, it's a worthwhile endeavour, as on specific days of the year, you can enter your animals into shows, race your horse and even fight your chickens.

These events not only prove to be a rather amusing diversion to the daily grind of tending to your farm, they also give you the opportunity to focus on the romantic aspect of the game.

Inhabiting the town are a number of girls vying for your affection. It's up to you to figure our what items they like to receive as presents, where they go on specific days and so forth. Bumping into them at special events and bestowing them with gifts, like flowers, will lead you on to the path to true love and eventually marriage.

Add to this the ability to indulge in a spot of cooking, upgrade your house from an old shack to a place you're willing to bring your newly-wed home to, as well as mining for rare minerals and fishing at the local stream and you'll find more than enough to hold your interest.

"YOU ONLY GET OUT WHAT YOU PUT IN – SLACK OFF AND THE REWARDS WON'T SHOW THEMSELVES"

FARMAGEDDON

It's very much a slow burner of a game, and you only get out of it what you put in. Slack off and the rewards won't show themselves. Plan your day and organise yourself well enough, and the game becomes a deeply absorbing experience.

That's not to say it's to everyone's taste, though. Although it has more than a whiff of RPG-cum-*Pokémon* to it (albeit without the battling) it's much more about intensive item management than anything else. There are a great deal of errandboy-like tasks to undertake in the early stages and you'll find yourself wandering back and forth for minutes at a time just trying to achieve menial tasks like collecting crops and watering seedlings. This can be a little off-putting and doubtless many gamers won't have the patience to stick at it – which would be a real shame.

Don't miss out: *Harvest Moon: Friends of Mineral Town* is one of the most charming GBA titles you could ever hope to play, helped no end by the heart-warmingly cute presentation and amusing little touches – and it comes highly recommended by us. Ooh arr? Oh yes.

GERAINT EVANS



INFO BURST

FROM	NATSUME
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	19TH MAR
COST	£30

"There should be something more substantial on offer"



△ The 'story' bits are a little better than in *FF:T*, but the actual game is poorer overall.

ONIMUSHA TACTICS

A case of 'too little, too late' for Capcom's isometric turn-based strategy game…

This plays like a stripped-down version of *Tactics Ogre* or *Final Fantasy Tactics*. Battles consist of manoeuvring and commanding your team of fighters against an opposing force on an isometric field. In *Onimusha*, however, there doesn't seem to be *that* much in the way of tactics to consider. You move and attack, move and attack and, particularly in the early stage of the game, you don't really have to put that much consideration into who you use and for what purpose – which, in our book, kind of defeats the whole object of playing a strategy game.

True, *FFT* was a little guilty of this from time to time, but at least it had a bewilderingly diverse character class structure. *Onimusha* doesn't have this level of depth off the battlefield either and so you've constantly got that feeling that there should be something more substantial on offer. Not bad, Capcom, but when you put it up against the superbly accomplished efforts of both *FFT* and *Fire Emblem*, it's a little difficult to recommend. We suggest you look to those two titles for your strategy fix…

GERAINT EVANS

△ Character types aren't too far-ranging.



△ You don't have access to the same level of statistical information as you do in *FF:T*.



△ The battles simply don't seem to have the same level of strategy and involvement.





△ By today's standards, this is simply too tedious an experience for you to bother with.



△ It's not a truly *awful* game – it's just that there are much better titles out there.

ALADDIN

Anyone fancy another ten-year-old SNES conversion… er… anyone?



We're not going to go on about how 'we had fond memories of this back in the day', or even how 'at the time' the animation was quite 'nice'. Okay, the animation *was* 'kind of nice' – and we suppose as Disney platformers went in those days, it was enjoyable – no, make that *acceptable* – gaming. These days, though, you can safely pigdeon-hole *Aladdin* in the 'mild/cack' category.

There really are no surprises here, even if you never played the original. All the festering elements of decade-old platformers rear their heads. Stomp on enemies' heads or chuck apples to temporarily incapacitate your foes, jump across moving platforms and bounce on… erm… bouncy things while moving from left to right to right. According to Capcom, a bonus stage has been added to each level to *cough*enhance playability*cough* but we'd have to agree to disagree on that particular point. The bonus bits are there, but the playability isn't.

So there really isn't much going for it then. It's too old and just too mediocre to seriously consider buying.

GERAINT EVANS





△ It's certainly fast, we'll give it that.



△ Fans of *Maximum Velocity* might like to give it a blast – but in our opinion this is a little too easy for hardcore *F-Zero* enthusiasts.



F-ZERO FALCON DENSETSU

Captain Falcon takes time out from his new anime for this long overdue handheld sequel…

When the GBA was first released in Japan and we all clamoured around to squint at its dimly-lit screen, the game everyone wanted to play was *F-Zero: Maximum Velocity* – we were all seriously impressed with it. The trouble is, things have moved on for GBA software since then. We've seen some truly incredible technical feats on the handheld (*Ecks vs Sever 2*, for instance…) and these, it has to be said, have taken the shine off Falcon's latest.

Still, it's hard to see how *F-Zero* fans will be disappointed, especially those who still cling to the delusion that the SNES version has yet to be bettered. This is classic *F-Zero* all the way. Flat tracks, 90° turns and shocking hairpins. The handling is still nice and smooth, while tricks like 'pumping' the accelerator are the order of the day if you're going to make it around the tougher tracks in one piece.

Pleasingly, there are some nice extra features hidden away too – the most important of which is the inclusion of the game's Story mode. Here you take control of a number of different characters and race against individual opponents in races of varying length. As you progress through a story (which, incidentally, is depicted through a number of anime stills between challenges) you unlock more story characters, whose stories you can explore from a selection screen. It's a nice addition to the game, sure, but when you compare it to its Gamecube cousin *F-Zero GX*, there seems to be a worrying lack of originality in the kinds of challenges you're faced with, while the difficulty level is perhaps just a touch too easy here.

Naturally, it's the main racing mode that's the real draw for gamers and, just as you'd expect, it's solid, high-speed fun – but as we said earlier, there's something that stops it from achieving greatness.

First, it doesn't 'wow' you visually. Apart from differences in craft design, engine trails and the like, it's all very much like *Maximum Velocity* – and that game's irritating mechanics rear their ugly heads again here, most notably, the CPU crafts' ability to cheat no matter how well you're performing yourself. This can make frustration set in rather quickly on the tougher difficulty settings.

More of the same might not necessarily be a bad thing, but we'd be lying if we said we hadn't hoped for better.

GERAINT EVANS



INFO BURST

FROM	NINTENDO
PLAYERS	1-4
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW (IMPORT)
COST	£30

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING
80


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FIVE FOR A PRIZE!

Over the next few pages, you'll see a selection of Top Fives – games hand-picked by us which we recommend anyone new to Nintendo Gamecube gets involved with. Now we want yours. They can be any regular category of game, or something a little different (your five favourite multiplayer games, five games with brilliant endings etc). Send us your Top Five list and earn yourself a priceless (or, more likely, worthless) prize!

NGC ESSENTIAL

THE BEST 'CUBE GAMES MONEY CAN BUY...



TOP FIVE PLACES WE'D RATHER BE

Blighty's cold and wet and will be for several months. We'd rather be somewhere warm and sunny...



SIRENA BEACH



SAILING HYRULE



OUTSET ISLAND



GELATO BEACH



LUXURY CRUISE









1 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA THE WIND WAKER — 97

NINTENDO ■ NGC/79

The babbling nonsense of the internet whingers faded to a stunned silence when "Nu Celda" finally hit the shelves. It's an interactive experience that's as exquisitely fashioned as a Disney feature film, and doesn't lose any of the gameplay for it. Some interminable sailing sections spoil it a bit, and it's pretty short, but this is as close to 'art' as 'games' have been yet.

NGC STAR GAME



2 METROID PRIME — 97



NINTENDO ■ NGC/79

A polished, addictive, stunningly immersive adventure-cum-shooter-cum-platformer that will make you cry when it's over. Pushes the envelope in every field. Classic.

3 SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE — 96



NINTENDO ■ NGC/73

Mazza's cleaning up oily muck on a tropical island put there by an evil villain. With all the intuitiveness, polished visuals and sense of pure fun of *Mario 64*, this pushes all the right buttons.

4 MARIO KART DOUBLE DASH!! — 93



NINTENDO ■ NGC/88

The best *Mario Kart* ever – and that's saying something. More characters than before, character-specific weapons and crazy tracks. *And* it's the best multi-player game on GC.

5 F-ZERO GX — 93



NINTENDO ■ NGC/85

Speed, challenge and stunningly designed tracks blended to form the finest of arcade racing experiences. And it really is fast. You won't put up with slowdown again.

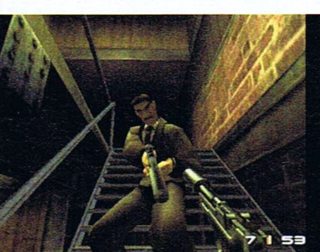
6 SOUL CALIBUR 2 — 92



NINTENDO ■ NGC/86

The best fighting game on *any* system. It's one of the best-looking games you'll have ever seen and offers rich depths to those who go looking. And you can go nuts with Link.

7 TIMESPLITTERS 2 — 92



EIDOS ■ NGC/72

A stonker of a time-travelling FPS with more than a whiff of *GoldenEye*, *Timesplitters 2* crept out of nowhere to officially become Gamecube's finest example of the genre. Wick!

8 SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE — 91



NINTENDO ■ NGC/68

Eye-singeing multiplayer, ingenious moves, cameos from about every Nintendo character ever, and some of the sweetest looks yet squeezed from the Cube.

9 WAVE RACE BLUE STORM — 91



NINTENDO ■ NGC/67

Slight frame-rate problems in PAL, but *Blue Storm* is still a fabulous racer, replete with *the* most incredible water effects ever. Fast, dynamic, accessible and sublime to control.

15 1080° AVALANCHE — 90





NINTENDO ■ NGC/89

Small, but perfectly formed snowboarding game with assured courses. Fewer tricks involved than in *SSX3* – more of a racer than an extreme sports title. You'll grow to love it.

10 HITMAN 2 SILENT ASSASSIN — 91

EIDOS ■ NGC/82

Tighten the fibre-wire and leave your morals at the door as Mr 47 brings his potent elimination simulation, freshly polished-up, to the 'Cube. This is stealthy, free-form gaming at its finest.

16 SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS — 90



ATARI ■ NGC/81

Vast boat-based RPG ported from the Dreamcast. "It'll take away a chunk of your life and you won't want it back", says a man versed in such things. It's very good, apparently.

11 VIEWTIFUL JOE — 90

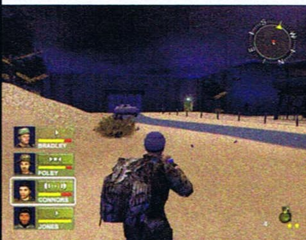


CAPCOM ■ NGC/80

Side-scrolling 2D beat-'em-up, in which Capcom want to make you feel you're editing a movie while playing a game. It works. Distinctive looks are the icing on the cake.

17 CONFLICT DESERT STORM 2 — 90







SCI ■ NGC/86

War? Like Georgie-boy Bush, we just can't get enough of it. You're not allowed to let any of your men die in this sequel, which leads to all sorts of life-saving heroic gameplay.

12 WORMS 3D — 90





SEGA ■ NGC/87

Essentially turn-based strategy, but loopier than a tin of spaghetti hoops. The annelids enter 3D – all you need for stupid amounts of fun are three homicidal pals.

18 SSX 3 — 89



EA ■ NGC/87

Improves over its already-excellent predecessor in every area. A range of modes, ludicrous tricks and the mountain to end all videogame mountains will keep you busy all the way through the winter.

13 BURNOUT 2 — 90



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80

B2 takes the best bits of the first game – bum-clenching speed and bone-crunching collisions – and welds them onto more modes than you can eat. A brilliant series refinement.

19 RESIDENT EVIL — 89



CAPCOM ■ NGC/72

The classic zombie–horror fear-fest recreated to take advantage of the Cube's superior electrical witchcraft. Stunning, mesmerising visuals, unrivalled atmosphere and a brilliant storyline. Controls are still crap, though.

14 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE — 90



ATARI ■ NGC/78

Essentially *Gauntlet* with lots of numbers and menu screens, online *PSO* becomes an epic tale of crate-smashing, internet companionship, and fevered item collection. Blork!

20 ETERNAL DARKNESS — 89





NINTENDO ■ NGC/74

A rollicking Lovecraftian yarn of ancient evils, *Eternal Darkness* replaces slick zombie-slaying action with a wonderfully creepy story told through a cast of 12 playable characters and a truly innovative magic system.

TOP TEN GBA GAMES





1 ADVANCE WARS 1 & 2
Cute-looking turn-based strategy, with a frighteningly addictive, super-challenging core. Honestly, it's better than it sounds. *AW2* is essentially *Advance Wars 1.5*, but it's tweaked to perfection.

2 METROID FUSION
Everything that has ever made *Metroid* great can be found here. A sprawling environment littered with baddies and an imposing difficulty level. It has a great link-up feature with *Prime* too.

3 SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2
This slightly tweaked version of the SNES classic boasts a massive game world and some of the tightest level designs ever. Stone-cold classic.

4 WARIO WARE
Remember Game & Watch? Now imagine all the rubbishy graphics and simple gameplay fired at you in five-second bursts. Loopy fun that you'll keep coming back to.

5 MARIO KART SUPER CIRCUIT
Nicks all the best bits from the SNES and N64 versions, and if you've got four friends, GBAs and link cables, they can play too.

6 POKÉMON RUBY & SAPPHIRE
The same structure as before – catch 'em all, send 'em in to battle – but it remains the most entertaining RPG out there…

7 STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3
An incredible conversion of one of the best fighters ever. Massive single-player and a brilliant two-player experience.



8 MARIO & LUIGI SUPERSTAR SAGA
An RPG with puzzle and platform elements starring our two top plumbers – stuffed with laughs.

9 GRADIUS ADVANCE
The best shooter on GBA, and it's doubtful many will ever get close. Classic *Gradius* gameplay, with innovative levels and fantastic bosses.

10 TOP GEAR RALLY
Technically impressive 3D racer – you can really feel the speed, despite the fact that it's on a handheld. It's got plenty of depth when you get into it.

NGC DIRECTORY

Your at-a-glance guide to everything else on GC...

HOW IT ALL WORKS

Title, score, publisher and where to find the review.

FINAL FANTASY BRISTOL CHRONICLES **88**

NORKSOFT ■ NGC/00

FF meets *Dead Or Alive* and the result is a juggytastic West Country adventure. More bristols than, erm, Bristol.

A brief outline of what to expect and whether you should consider it…



18 WHEELER PRO AMERICAN TRUCKER — 48
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/68
Drive your truck and avoid 'smokey'. Like *Out Run* with 'rigs', but the arcade version with the sit-in cabinet was better.

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP — 30
EA ■ NGC/69
As much fun as being told your parents have been crushed to death in a horrific car crash and then contracting Weil's Disease.

ACE GOLF — 74
EIDOS ■ NGC/74
A highly enjoyable, relaxing sticksie-ball game that treads a pleasant middle-ground between fun and serious.

AGGRESSIVE INLINE — 81
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72
Hawk's alterno-clone – you skate around massive arenas, 'busting' tricks on a pair of 'roller-boots'.

ATV QUAD POWER RACING 2 — 70
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/77
Wave Race on land with farming utility vehicles. Competent, but there's superior racing fare out there.

BALDUR'S GATE DARK ALLIANCE — 80
VIVENDI ■ NGC/81
Dungeon-slashing adventurising with fewer numbers and a special two-player flavour. Actually quite good.

BARBARIAN — 70
VIRGIN ■ NGC/72
A button-mashing fantasy battler complete with fully-smashable arenas. Fun, but not as good as *Smash Bros.*



BATMAN: DARK TOMORROW — 15
KEMCO ■ NGC/81
For ages, Gamecube's most arse-clenchingly bad title. Clunky, dull, gameplay-free superheroics. Do not buy this game.

BATMAN: RISE OF SIN TZU — 45
UBI SOFT ■ NGC/88
Repeated bashing that would've been great 15 years ago. It's okay, but only just. Batman deserves better.

BATMAN VENGEANCE — 70
UBI SOFT ■ NGC/67
Cel-shaded platforming cartoon bat-action. One of the first Cube games that came out but it's looking pretty ropy already.

BEACH SPIKERS — 79
ATARI ■ NGC/72
Volleyball on sand. Addictive with four players, but the single-player's longevity lets the side down.

BEYBLADE: SUPER TOURNAMENT BATTLE — 10
ATARI ■ NGC/88
For £40, we'll come round and cheesegrater your eyeballs. It's more fun and lasts longer than this frickin' spinning top sim.

BIG AIR FREESTYLE — 28
ATARI ■ NGC/75
Another awful off-road bike title, the kind that makes you want to cry the second you've started playing.

BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS — 71
EMPIRE ■ NGC/83
A cross between *Elite* and Smokey and The Bandit, but with The Reynolds replaced by wall-eyed hillbillies.

BILLY HATCHER & THE GIANT EGG — 86
SEGA ■ NGC/87
Rescue the Chicken Elders by rolling an egg around and smacking bad guys with it. Hatch it while you can!

TOP FIVE PLATFORM GAMES



SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE
A tour-de-force of everything good gaming should be.

LUIGI'S MANSION
Yes, it's a little easy to polish off, but you'll enjoy every second.

RAYMAN 3 HOODLUM HAVOC
Can't touch *Sunshine*, but it's entertaining and looks 'the bomb'.

WARIO WORLD
Not that tough to beat, admittedly, but still bags of fun.

SONIC MEGA COLLECTION
The best hedgehog games in existence on one tiny disc.

TOP FIVE RACING GAMES



MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!!
Single-player mode looks as cute as ever, but is rock hard.

F-ZERO GX
Expertly crafted arcade fun. Really rockets along.

WAVE RACE BLUE STORM
Classic Nintendo action with dazzling water effects.

BURNOUT 2
Fast car racing combined with steel-crunching crashes.

EXTREME G 3
The weapons are what make this future racer shine.

BIONICLE — 29
EA ■ NGC/87
Diabionicle, more like. Tedious and fiddly with a duff camera and no incentive to keep playing. Stick to bricks, Lego.

BLOOD OMEN 2 LEGACY OF KAIN — 72
EIDOS ■ NGC/77
Gamecube's other undead hack-fest. After 1,000 years of slumber, evil vampire Kain is awake and hungry.

BLOOD RAYNE — 65
VIVENDI ■ NGC/79
Vampire fun. Dismember Nazis, fire an array of period weaponry, and battle an *evil priest* driving an *armoured pulpit.*

BLOODY ROAR: PRIMAL FURY — 74
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68
Competent morphing-into-animals fighting shenanigans, but *Capcom vs SNK* and *Mortal Kombat* have surpassed it.

BMX XXX — 48
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/76
Childish, boring BMX game featuring pneumatically-enhanced strippers showing you their nipples. Get a girlfriend instead.

BOMBERMAN GENERATIONS — 70
VIVENDI ■ NGC/76
Yet another update of the venerable arson franchise. Single-player is a little tedious; four-player is addictive as ever.

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER CHAOS BLEEDS — 70
VIVENDI ■ NGC/86
Somehow lacking in essential Buffiness, and not just because the Gellar girl didn't voice it. Good, but not great.

BURNOUT — 86
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
With spectacular crashes and inch-perfect handling, *Burnout* is a dream of a game, even if it's over a bit quickly.

CAPCOM VS SNK 2 EO — 79
CAPCOM ■ NGC/72
A great game, but purist retro freaks will want to fork out for a clunky arcade stick to get the most from it…

CASTLEWEEN — 16
WANADOO ■ NGC/81
Unfairly difficult dismal platforming tedium with some kind of cartoony black magic schtick going on.

CEL DAMAGE — 60
EA ■ NGC/66
Cel-shaded car-combat game in the vein of violent cartoons. Too manic and confusing for its own good.

CONFLICT DESERT STORM — 89
SCI ■ NGC/80
Tense and teeth-gritting, with a great co-op mode. Brain-based fun for those nuclear winter evenings.

CRASH BANDICOOT THE WRATH OF CORTEX — 40
VIVENDI ■ NGC/75
One of the worst ports we've seen – of a game that was a stinking load of crap to begin with! Avoid like death himself.

CRASH NITRO KART — 53
VIVENDI ■ NGC/89
The basic graphics and cheaty CPU karters are bad enough, but the loading times are completely ridiculous. Buy *Mario Kart.*

CRAZY TAXI — 70
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
Ancient title that's so old it's now been included as one of the minigames in *GTAIII.* Creaky graphics, but still good fun.

DAKAR 2 — **79**
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80
Driving around in a vast expanse of dirt, all on your own, for days on end? *Dakar 2* manages to make this pretty good fun.

DARK SUMMIT — **51**
THQ ■ NGC/69
SSX Tricky but with all the speed, style and entertainment removed with near-surgical precision. A waste of time.

DAVE MIRRA 2 FREESTYLE BMX — **75**
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
Pornography-free, good, moto-cross game. Slick, with big arenas – but will only appeal to the BMX hardcore.

DIE HARD VENDETTA — **80**
VIVENDI ■ NGC/74
Shoot holes in people who look like terrorists, so the US can enjoy one more night of guiltless slumber.

DEAD TO RIGHTS — **60**
EA ■ NGC/83
What if Max Payne had an attack dog? Mindless ultraviolence. JACK SLATE is PISSED OFF and wants to HURT SOMEONE!

DEFENDER — **50**
MIDWAY ■ NGC/79
Pointless 3D update that makes one of the hardest-core arcade classics really easy and, by extension, depressingly dull.

DEF JAM VENDETTA — **87**
MAJESCO ■ NGC/82
Wrestling thumpfest featuring all your favourite hip-hop artistes from 'the block'. Bone-crunching moves and 'sick' beats.

DISNEY'S EXTREME SKATE ADVENTURE — **74**
DISNEY ■ NGC/85
Neither extreme nor adventurous, but perfectly fine for people not up to *Tony Hawk's*, like your little brother or nan.

DISNEY'S MAGICAL MIRROR — **26**
DISNEY ■ NGC/73
Cruel torture as The Mouse patronises his way through this hideous 'adventure'. Almost Beckettian in its non-eventfulness.

DISNEY SPORTS BASKETBALL — **55**
KONAMI ■ NGC/82
Strip away the franchised exterior and it's another simple Sports title. Soon to follow: *Disney Sports Russian Roulette*.

DISNEY SPORTS FOOTBALL — **69**
KONAMI ■ NGC/76
This isn't anywhere near as bad as you may think. It's an amusing, simple footie game for younger gamers.

DISNEY'S PARTY — **56**
EA ■ NGC/86
Mickey and chums come up with a mildly entertaining party game – but would you pay £30 to be mildly entertained?

DISNEY SPORTS SKATEBOARDING — **64**
KONAMI ■ NGC/80
The Mouse and his irritating friends have a crack at busting tricks on half-pipes. Walt must be spinning in his cryogenic pod.

DONALD DUCK GOIN' QUACKERS — **32**
UBI SOFT ■ NGC/68
Like *Crash Bandicoot*, but with The Duck in charge, wearing a sailor suit and going bthackakackth. Also total rubbish.

DOSHIN THE GIANT — **62**
NINTENDO ■ NGC/74
Quirky title that puts you in charge of a giant yellow man who must help/hinder indigenous islanders. A little short-lived.

TOP FIVE FIGHTING GAMES



SOUL CALIBUR 2
Gorgeous Link-fuelled beat-'em-up from fight kings Namco.

SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE
All your favourite Ninty types pounding each other's faces in.

VIEWTIFUL JOE
The only one-player beat-'em-up in our top five. Stunning.

DEF JAM VENDETTA
The wrestling game that appeals to non-grapple fans as well.

MK DEADLY ALLIANCE
"Mind if I remove your spleen?" "Ooh, go on – finish me."

TOP FIVE SHOOTING GAMES



METROID PRIME
Tough as nails shooting-heavy sci-fi adventure.

TIME-SPLITTERS 2
Pure class first-person shooting from the *GoldenEye* boys.

STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER
Looks great and lacks the ropy on-foot sections of the sequel.

XIII
Euro-shooter with comic-book looks and very serious violence.

IKARUGA
A pure arcade shooter that's tougher than most.

DRAGON BALL Z: BUDOKAI — **43**
ATARI ■ NGC/87
Dated fighter where the characters move as though their feet have been dipped in concrete. Avoid even if you're a DBZ fan.

DRIVEN — **60**
BAM ■ NGC/68
Very basic, very short game of the appaling film about driving fast in a large circle. Filling up bargain bins as we speak.

DR MUTO — **70**
MIDWAY ■ NGC/79
Amusing mad-doctor platforming game where you have to mutate into different animals to solve puzzles.

DROME RACERS — **46**
EA ■ NGC/85
Brings absolutely nothing new to racing, and doesn't manage to do the old stuff with any flair either.

EGGO MANIA — **49**
KEMCO ■ NGC/72
Rubbish take on *Tetris* that, mystifyingly, involves ovulations. Wouldn't look out of place on an Amiga. Pointless in every way.

ENTER THE MATRIX — **73**
ATARI ■ NGC/81
Take the red pill and find out how vaguely disappointing this movie tie-in is. We were expecting something really special.

ESPN INTERNATIONAL WINTER SPORTS 2002 — **37**
KONAMI ■ NGC/67
Winter sports game combining tiresome button-mashing antics with equally dull timing and precision exercises. Dull.

EVOLUTION SKATEBOARDING — **78**
KONAMI ■ NGC/79
Snazzy-looking *Hawk's* clone, but then, who wants an Elvis impersonator if the King's in town?

EVOLUTION SNOWBOARDING — **23**
KONAMI ■ NGC/79
Fight bad guys while sliding down a mountain on a tray. Worse even than *Dark Summit*. Games like this should be made illegal.

EXTREME G3 — **85**
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
An underrated gem, *XG 3* offers pulse-shattering speed, huge tracks, some ingenious weaponry and eye-sparkling visuals.

F1 2002 — **67**
EA ■ NGC/71
Rock-hard racing your dad will enjoy. Also features humourless Hun driving robot Schumacher version 1.0.

F1 CAREER CHALLENGE — **81**
EA ■ NGC/83
Packed representation of the glamorous world of F1 team management. You can take the cars for a spin too.

FIFA FOOTBALL 2003 — **83**
EA ■ NGC/75
EA finally remember how good football games are made. Actually a bit better than *ISS 2*. A vast improvement.

FIFA FOOTBALL 2004 — **85**
EA ■ NGC/87
It wasn't broken, but EA have fixed it anyway, slinging in more stats, new animations and a great Career mode.

FINDING NEMO — **65**
THQ ■ NGC/86
Horrible loading times and stuttering graphics spoil what could have been enjoyable for rugrat gamers.

FREEDOM FIGHTERS — **83**
IO ■ NGC/86
Blast invading Russian commies intent on taking over the US. Realistic? Not on your nelski. Fun? Oh da.

FIREBLADE — **59**
MIDWAY ■ NGC/77
Brain-free 'copter game that'll appeal to military memorabilia-collecting psychos and fans of 80s Vietnam war films.

FROGGER BEYOND — **59**
KONAMI ■ NGC/80
The trend for 'improving' ancient games by making them 3D taken to its most extreme conclusion.

GAUNTLET: DARK LEGACY — **25**
MIDWAY ■ NGC/68
We'd be far more comfortable with this travesty if we'd had it inserted rectally. An insult to the memory of an arcade classic.

GLADIUS — **70**
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/88
Persevere with the tutorials and odd glitches – there's a huge and rewarding strategy title buried under the shoddy graphics.

GODZILLA: DESTROY ALL MONSTERS MELEE — **68**
ATARI ■ NGC/74
Stompy, building-smashing monster fun in multiplayer mode, but otherwise a little weak. Get *Smash Bros* instead.

GOTCHA FORCE — **69**
CAPCOM ■ NGC/90
Repetitive robot collect-'em-up battler which is actually pretty good fun, if a tad simple and repetitive.

HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS — **78**
EA ■ NGC/75
Attractive and competent adaptation of Potter's film – but rather easy. Only die-hard wizard fans need apply.

HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE — **70**
EA ■ NGC/89
Originally out on PS2 before *CoS*, now out on Cube with graphics nabbed from *CoS*. At least the game's simple…

HARRY POTTER QUIDDITCH WORLD CUP — **62**
EA ■ NGC/88
Potter fans will love the details from the books, but as a sports game, this broom-based title is one to sweep under the rug…

THE HOBBIT — **58**
VIVENDI ■ NGC/88
Competent enough cutesy adventure but somehow not interesting, despite elves and dragons and dwarves, oh my.

HOT WHEELS HIGHWAY 35 WORLD RACE — **33**
THQ ■ NGC/90
Ugly, gaudy and unforgivably slow racer. Oh, and the handling's rubbish. Too boring to have a place on your Cube.

HOT WHEELS VELOCITY X — **45**
THQ ■ NGC/75
Basic racing/car-combat game based on plastic toys. Strictly for the very, very young. Or very stupid.

HULK — **65**
VIVENDI ■ NGC/82
Get angry, turn green, and SMASH your way through puny soldiers. Also stealth sections with boring Bruce Banner.

IKARUGA — **85**
ATARI ■ NGC/80
Classically old-style shooter – originally designed for robots, now available for human consumption. Very, very, *very* hard.



Every Gamecube game ever… rated!

ISS 2 — **83**
KONAMI ■ NGC/68
A winning formula mystifyingly tarnished with unnecessary 'improvements'. Good – but also a step backwards.

ISS 3 — **78**
KONAMI ■ NGC/82
The once-invincible football series sinks ever lower with a misguided new 'close-up' mode.

THE ITALIAN JOB: LA HEIST — **54**
EIDOS ■ NGC/85
So short, even total games goobers can finish it. The lack of variety doesn't help. A mini driving game in every respect.

JAMES BOND 007 AGENT UNDER FIRE — **70**
EA ■ NGC/70
Workaday gameplay dressed up in off-the-peg shooter upholstery, shooting baddies with ping-pong balls.

JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE — **72**
EA ■ NGC/75
The best Bond game on Gamecube so far – done with flair – but the visuals can't hide an FPS that's lacking overall.

JEDI KNIGHT II — **67**
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
A seriously disappointing PC conversion of an overrated shooter. Huge game, but quite tedious.

JEREMY MCGRATH SUPERCROSS WORLD — **20**
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/69
Like a horrible nightmare about doing cross-country wearing nothing but steel-wool pants and barbed-wire flip-flops.

JIMMY NEUTRON BOY GENIUS — **18**
THQ ■ NGC/78
Tedious, sorry, devoid-of-inspiration 'puzzle' game that actually manages to out-borify *Universal Studios*.

JIMMY NEUTRON JET FUSION — **71**
THQ ■ NGC/89
Jimmy's second game is a big improvement. A simple platformer good for younger gamers.

JUDGE DREDD DREDD VS DEATH — **84**
VIVENDI ■ NGC/89
An atmospheric, exciting shooter made even better by the presence of the Big Chin himself, Judge Dredd. Drokk!

KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER — **75**
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/73
Same old trick-based extreme-sports, but this time in tubes made of water. Quite good fun, for a while.

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2003 — **79**
EA ■ NGC/75
If the arcadey nature of *Rocky* doesn't sit that well with you, give this face-smashing simulator a go instead.

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING — **47**
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/69
Bringing back old-skool 'rasslers' isn't enough to make this any good. A shambolic licensing cash-cow.

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING II — **50**
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/76
Yet another travesty of a wrestling game, but made marginally better by the addition of Big Daddy.

LOONEY TUNES BACK IN ACTION — **56**
EA ■ NGC/90
Irritating monkey-collecting platformer. You'll find yourself wearing a tinfoil hat to stop all the voices.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE RETURN OF THE KING — **86**
EA ■ NGC/87
More playable characters, including Gandalf, and less button-mashing permitted make an epic, very enjoyable sequel.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE TWO TOWERS — **68**
EA ■ NGC/78
Repetitive hacking game with RPG overtones. Guide your man through levels making goblin prosciutto and orc sausages.

LOST KINGDOMS — **86**
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/70
Collect, er, cards, and battle monsters with them in fantasy landscapes. The sequel does it better, though.

LOST KINGDOMS 2 — **87**
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/81
Set 200 years after the events of the first game. It's a more satisfying experience, but it's still on the frothy side.

LUIGI'S MANSION — **88**
NINTENDO ■ NGC/67
Luigi stars in this short, but still ace, fantastically playable combination of *Super Mario World* and *Ghostbusters*.

MADDEN NFL 2004 — **87**
EA ■ NGC/85
Great stuff – a satisfying and accessible version of the sport for both newbies and experienced Yankee Egg Chasers.

MARIO PARTY 4 — **68**
NINTENDO ■ NGC/75
Disappointing. Not bad if you're in the mood for party fun, but it's done little to improve on the originals.

MARIO PARTY 5 — **80**
NINTENDO ■ NGC/89
A much better boardgame from Mazza, although the new Capsule system can slow things down a lot.

MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2 — **70**
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
A decent extreme sports sim. A bit slicker than *Dave Mirra*, but with smaller, tighter arenas. Does the job.

MEDAL OF HONOR FRONTLINE — **74**
EA ■ NGC/75
FPS set during World War II. Looks ropy in places, but it's atmospheric and highly enjoyable.

MEDAL OF HONOR RISING SUN — **67**
EA ■ NGC/88
Looks so old, it should come packaged with Werthers Originals, and both allies and enemies are a bit thick. Disappointing.

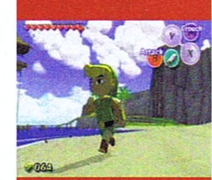
MEGA MAN NETWORK TRANSMISSION — **59**
CAPCOM ■ NGC/84
Here's an idea: take a great GBA game, strip the good bits out and put the resulting platformer on GC. Yeah, that's *brilliant*.

MEN IN BLACK II ALIEN ESCAPE — **45**
ATARI ■ NGC/78
Rubbish off-the-peg third-person shooting game of the rubbish off-the-peg movie sequel. Did we mention it was rubbish?

METAL ARMS GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM — **82**
VIVENDI ■ NGC/88
Well-designed bottylicious shooter. It's big and it's extremely tough. And we all love robots with guns, eh?

MICRO MACHINES — **57**
ATARI ■ NGC/78
Like the recipe for bread or wine gums, *Micro Machines* doesn't change much, and this iteration is no exception.

TOP FIVE ADVENTURE/ RPGS



ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER
Phenomenal. A reason to own Gamecube itself.

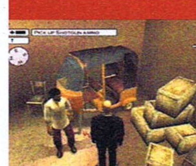
METROID PRIME
Tough as nails shooting-heavy sci-fi adventure. Again.

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE
A number-cruncher that turns epic with a bit of t'internet.

SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS
If 'classic' RPGs are your bag, this boy'll be a sackful of joy.

LOST KINGDOMS II
Polished RPG with card collecting elements. Neat.

TOP FIVE ACTION ADVENTURES



HITMAN 2
Compelling assassin sim that kills the competition dead.

RESIDENT EVIL
A superior zombie-cruncher with slightly niggly controls.

ETERNAL DARKNESS
Another Nintendo exclusive that never fails to entertain.

SPLINTER CELL
Captivating stealth-laced adventure from the hand of Clancy.

RESIDENT EVIL 0
Not as good as those titles up there, but it's still dead good fun.

MINORITY REPORT — **39**
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/77
Astonishingly brutal third-rate ass-whupping game that takes place on the sets of a Spielberg movie.

MORTAL KOMBAT DEADLY ALLIANCE — **80**
MIDWAY ■ NGC/77
The best *Kombat* yet! The blood-soaked spine-ripping yarn finally gets the update it deserves on Gamecube. Finish him!

MX SUPERFLY — **63**
THQ ■ NGC/73
Handles like you're driving space bikes on the surface of the moon. The best of a very bad bunch, though.

MYSTIC HEROES — **71**
THQ ■ NGC/75
Simplistic 3D *Gauntlet*-style slasher that's somehow entertaining and charming. Well, Geraint thinks so.

NBA 2K3 — **85**
ATARI ■ NGC/79
Puts all other basketball games to shame. Great gameplay complements an engrossing Career mode.

NBA COURTSIDE 2002 — **79**
NINTENDO ■ NGC/68
The second-best basketball sim available, but it's still lacking. Strictly for hardcore fans of the Ball of B.

NBA LIVE 2003 — **70**
EA ■ NGC/75
The yearly EA update. Solid gameplay; lots and lots of lovely numbers; otherwise not much different from last year.

NBA LIVE 2004 — **86**
EA ■ NGC/88
After a good tweaking, this year's *NBA Live* has tighter controls and a vastly improved Dynasty mode. A tab soulless, mind.

NBA STREET VOL 2 — **88**
EA ■ NGC/85
Almost negates the need for realistic sports sims – and all for half the price of real basketball trainers.

NEED FOR SPEED 2 HOT PURSUIT — **69**
EA ■ NGC/74
Ironically slow racer. A lazy port has ruined what was originally a pretty entertaining franchise.

NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND — **77**
EA ■ NGC/88
Aargh! Aargh! I can't see… oh, hang on, that's the graphics. This street racer needs a bit more attention to detail, we feel.

NFL 2K3 — **86**
ATARI ■ NGC/79
A meaty gridiron sim that could even threaten *Madden*. Management bits don't detract from the gameplay.

NFL STREET — **79**
EA ■ NGC/90
American footie takes to the streets. It's got a great Challenge mode and four-player game, but it'll take ages if you're duff.

NHL 2003 — **64**
EA ■ NGC/75
A realistic approach to ice hockey which isn't particularly fast or – more importantly – fun.

NHL 2004 — **57**
EA ■ NGC/85
Behind-the-scenes additions don't compensate for the terrible frame rate on the ice. Play it at your peril.

NHL 2K3 — 72
ATARI ■ NGC/80
Complicated ice hockey title with stodgy gameplay. Similar to *NFL 2K3*, but doesn't quite pull it off.

NHL HITZ 20-02 — 79
MIDWAY ■ NGC/67
Exaggerated ice hockey title in a similar vein to *Red Card*, where the sticks aren't just for hitting the puck.

NHL HITZ 20-03 — 65
MIDWAY ■ NGC/74
Another year, another dose of frantic ice action. Not much cop on the original, mind.

PAC MAN WORLD 2 — 70
EA ■ NGC/78
The Pac is back for hilarious retro-themed platforming fun. Shamelessly pilfers everything from *Mario 64*.

PIKMIN — 86
NINTENDO ■ NGC/80
Created using textures from Shigsy's own garden. A wonderful real-time strategy with multicoloured vegetable men.

P.N.03 — 77
CAPCOM ■ NGC/84
This super-stylish shooter with its dancing heroine is only marred by dull bosses and design.

PRO RALLY 2002 — 58
UBI SOFT ■ NGC/74
An okay game completely and ruthlessly dragged down by its thoroughly awful, frustrating handling.

PRO TENNIS WTA TOUR — 48
KONAMI ■ NGC/74
The only tennis game on 'Cube so far, but with rubbish non-analogue controls and distinctly whiffy visuals.

RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP — 74
SCI ■ NGC/78
Solid, does all the things a rallying game should. Should do the job until *McCrae* sees the light of day.

RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC — 84
UBI SOFT ■ NGC/78
The limbless French Freak™ has the last laugh with a game that, insists our correspondent, is actually good.

RED CARD 20-03 — 78
MIDWAY ■ NGC/71
Violent football game where you mince opponents with stud and fist until the meat shows.

RED FACTION — 66
THQ ■ NGC/82
Shoot capitalist scum in the face, and maybe blow some holes in walls too, in this distinctly average brown fighting game.

REIGN OF FIRE — 59
BAM ■ NGC/76
A poor game of a poor film, even if you do get to burn stuff. Nice ideas ruined by dodgy physics and controls.

RESIDENT EVIL ZERO — 85
CAPCOM ■ NGC/78
Ditches the solo formula for a two-character system. Great set-pieces, looks lovely... more *Resi*, basically.

RESIDENT EVIL 2 — 62
CAPCOM ■ NGC/81
Experience the shambling, undead terror of original PSone graphics! Revisit Leon and Claire for just... £30!

TOP FIVE SPORTS SIMS

NBA STREET VOL 2
Not strictly a 'sim' but an off-the-wall b-ball title which puts more serious games to shame.

MADDEN NFL 2004
Forget soccer – sorry, 'sotcher' – Madden's still delivering the best pitch-based entertainment on the Gamecube.

NBA LIVE 2004
EA's superb 'serious' basketball title.

FIFA 2004
The best *FIFA* yet.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004
The final entry in our sports game listing is both a) another EA game and b) a golf game. It's ace though.

TOP FIVE EXTREME SPORTS GAMES



1080° AVALANCHE
More refined and robust than *SSX*.

SSX3
Fantastic sequel with plenty of challenge. More stunts than *1080°* – but not *quite* as polished a racer.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3
Absorbing wheel-'em-up. *Tony Hawk's 4's* worth a look too.

AGGRESSIVE INLINE
Roller boot-based *Tony Hawk's* style action.

EVOLUTION SKATEBOARDING
Another *Hawk's* clone that'solidly put together.

RESIDENT EVIL: NEMESIS — 65
CAPCOM ■ NGC/81
Braaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii nnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnssssssssssssssssssssssssss! Etcetera.

ROBOTECH BATTLECRY — 77
TDK ■ NGC/77
Stompy robots go to war in the game of the loony Japanese cartoon. Not bad, as far as stompy robot games go.

ROCKY — 78
RAGE ■ NGC/74
A solid fighter where you guide Rockies one to five to greatness. Top two-player, loads of unlockable extras.

ROGUE OPS — 62
KEMCO ■ NGC/90
The spirit of Joanna Dark lives on – but only just – in the form of Nikki Connors. Nowehere near as good, mind.

SCOOBY DOO NIGHT OF 100 FRIGHTS! — 36
THQ ■ NGC/74
Platforming non-action that'll hold your interest for half an hour or until you need to go to the loo; whichever comes first.

THE SCORPION KING — 30
VIVENDI ■ NGC/75
Bad. Very bad. Guide a poor approximation of The Rock and hit bad guys over and over until they bleed from the eyeholes.

SEGA SOCCER SLAM — 67
ATARI ■ NGC/74
A cartoonish footie game with an interest in violence. Cracking in multiplayer – poor on your own.

THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN — 80
VIVENDI ■ NGC/87
The Simpsons take a tip from *GTA* and start driving recklessly and doling out the violence. And what's more, it works!

THE SIMPSONS: ROAD RAGE — 52
EA ■ NGC/68
A really quite bad *Crazy Taxi* rip-off, with Simpsons characters bolted on, spewing repetitive 'funny' one-liners.

THE SIMS — 81
EA ■ NGC/79
Highly addictive people simulating comes to the Cube. A great sense of humour and lots of potential for mischief.

THE SIMS BUSTIN' OUT — 72
EA ■ NGC/89
What's outside the house? Hmm? No longer is your sim confined to his own four walls. Agoraphobics beware.

SMUGGLER'S RUN WARZONES — 78
ROCKSTAR ■ NGC/73
Huge landscapes and fast-paced 'racing' in buggies is let down by repetitive gameplay and awful music.

SONIC ADVENTURE 2 BATTLE — 70
ATARI ■ NGC/67
Sega's annoying mascot on Gamecube, now with an extra dimension added. Does anyone care any more?

SONIC ADVENTURE DX DIRECTOR'S CUT — 38
ATARI ■ NGC/83
A GBA link-up feature for GC, but otherwise a straight port of a game that was rubbish to begin with.

SPEED KINGS — 57
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/83
Wannabe *Burnout* with, strangely, lots of sliding under lorries involved. Otherwise bland and unnecessary.

SONIC MEGA COLLECTION — 70
ATARI ■ NGC/79
If you have a retro craving, you could do worse: seven games on one disc, accurate down to the loading times!

SPIDER-MAN THE MOVIE — 72
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/69
Dodgy control and camera are the only problems with this platform adventure. Voiced by the original cast.

SPY HUNTER — 55
MIDWAY ■ NGC/68
Appaling frame-rate, nasty course design and linear racing make this one to avoid. A pointless remake.

SPYRO: ENTER THE DRAGONFLY — 40
VIVENDI ■ NGC/75
Much like *Crash Bandicoot*, this is another shoddy port of a game that was never much fun in the first place.

SSX TRICKY — 87
EA ■ NGC/69
Has PS2 written all over it, but is still excellent. Fast courses, shortcuts and secrets and mid-piste scrappage equal FUN.

STAR WARS BOUNTY HUNTER — 68
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/77
The panting, pot-bellied, totally rubbish space-assassin gets the *Tomb Raider* treatment in this distinctly average game.

STAR WARS THE CLONE WARS — 71
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
Enjoyable *Battlezone*-style tank blaster set around Episode II – not quite as good as *Rogue Leader*, but still fun all the same.

STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER — 87
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68
The most memorable – and certainly the best-looking – Star Wars game yet. The Battle of Hoth will melt your eyes.

STAR WARS: ROGUE SQUADRON 3: REBEL STRIKE — 83
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/88
On-foot sections? Star Wars is about whizzing around in fighty spaceships, not saving some bint half-deaf from padded ears.

STARFOX ADVENTURES — 72
NINTENDO ■ NGC/74
Adventure that's way too easy and linear. Not awful, but should have been far better. Hardly a fitting send-off for Rare.

SPLINTER CELL — 89
UBI SOFT ■ NGC/81
Clanciverse stealth-fest with a gritty feel and the opportunity to operate various Clancy-approved hi-tech gizmos.

SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS THE BATTLE FOR BIKINI BOTTOM — 32
THQ ■ NGC/89
The plot's weak and the levels are badly designed – and still the nauseating Spongebob doesn't look good by comparison.





Every Gamecube game ever… rated!

THE SUM OF ALL FEARS — 25
UBI SOFT ■ NGC/76
One of the most technically inept games we've played. Clancy says bury the copies in the desert before anyone notices.

SUMMONER A GODDESS REBORN — 68
THQ ■ NGC/79
Much levelling-up and numbers floating out of people's heads. Crappy visuals, but an engrossing adventure.

SUPER BUBBLE POP — 65
JALECO ■ NGC/78
Kind of *Tetris*-y flavoured *Bust-a-Move* for the Sunny Delight generation, with chemically-induced visuals and music. Wick.

SUPER BUST-A-MOVE ALL STARS — 70
UBI SOFT ■ NGC/89
It's *Bust-A-Move*! On your Gamecube! Puzzle fans rejoice – but only buy it if you haven't got a version already.

SUPERMAN: SHADOW OF APOKOLIPS — 60
ATARI ■ NGC/81
Supes redeems himself somewhat with this stylised and, most importantly, maze-free effort based on the animated cartoons.

SUPER MONKEY BALL — 88
ATARI ■ NGC/67
Ingenious simian-flavoured update of *Marble Madness*. One of the weirdest, most wonderful Gamecube games out there.

SUPER MONKEY BALL 2 — 82
ATARI ■ NGC/78
The apes are back with levels even harder of core, and a mental new story mode involving love, betrayal and banana-theft.

SX SUPERSTAR — 71
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/83
Unassuming motocross scrambling, enhanced with a *Def Jam*-style Career mode than involves girlfriend upgrades.

TARZAN FREERIDE — 59
UBI SOFT ■ NGC/67
Disney. Platformer. Need we say any more? Workaday, jungle-based gameplay with the Seventh Earl of Greystoke.

TAZ WANTED — 52
ATARI ■ NGC/72
Some of the worst level design we've ever seen in this middling, frustrating cel-shaded *Mario*-wannabe platformer.

TETRIS WORLDS — 38
THQ ■ NGC/73
THQ ruin one of the Best Games Ever by trying to make it 'better'. Will anyone stop these people before it's too late?

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2003 — 82
EA ■ NGC/75
The world most efficient golf robot gets his own game. Actually really good, in a surprisingly arcadey way. Nice graphics, too.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004 — 84
EA ■ NGC/86
Ginormous plus humungous multiplied by golf. Apart from that and a few tweaks for stattoes, it's the same as the last one.

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON — 66
UBI SOFT ■ NGC/79
Clancy has yet another go at squad-based tactical ops, and this time things run a little bit more smoothly. Entertaining stuff.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3 — 87
ACTIVISION NGC/67
Mental grinds and stunts backed up by a mountain of extras and vast skate parks – if you haven't tried *Hawk's*, do it now.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4 — 85
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
No time limits and some great RPG elements and minigames complement the larger areas in *TH4* – a well-tweaked fourquel.

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND — 79
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/88
For a series that's been running so long, the latest Hawk's lacks visual polish but the Story mode's been massively improved.

TOP ANGLER — 35
XICAT ■ NGC/81
Generic fishing game, predictably involving bass, that doesn't even get the basics of its limited genre right. Tiresome.

TOP GUN: COMBAT ZONES — 71
VIRGIN ■ NGC/72
Wingman-being movie-based flyboy antics. GC's only flight 'sim' – pretty challenging, but we recommend you try it first.

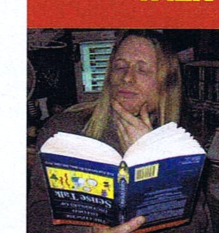
TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER — 60
EA ■ NGC/76
An average platformer with an Antipodean twist. It's a solid example of the genre but nothing more or less.

TUROK EVOLUTION — 71
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/73
Relatively disappointing dino-hunting FPS sequel. Not as bad as *Turok 3* on N64, but serious niggles let the series down badly.

TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA — 75
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/88
Looks great, but some of the gameplay's fiddlier than a violinists' convention. As close as you'll get to *GTA* on 'Cube.

UFC THROWDOWN — 51
UBI SOFT ■ NGC/73
Highly amusing freestyle thump-fest, where you lead your oily, grunting man to victory in some Greek-style athletic contest.

PAUL'S SENSE TALK



PLAN 'B'
Just remember, the right plan can also be the wrong one. So wrong in fact, that you'll never see why until you've had a whole wheelbarrow full of fun doing it.

EMPTY BOXES
Before peeking, always ask yourself whether what you think is in the box is nicer than what's probably there. Could be best to leave it be, but how will you know? Ah, life, huh?

GLASS THEORY
People are all too preoccupied with whether it's half full or half empty. Surely what's more important is whether it's yours, and who's buying the next.

TREE-HUGGING HIPPY SPEAK
Don't hate anyone, that's it really.

OPINIONS
Opinions are like buttholes – everyone's got one, but other people's stink.
By MAJU – gamesradar forum

Do you have more 'sense' than our Sense Master Paul Edwards? You probably do! He wants your Sense Talks, mate!

Send them to him at **paul.edwards@futurenet.co.uk** or to Sense Talk at the usual address.

UNIVERSAL STUDIOS — 24
KEMCO ■ NGC/67
Anyone who makes a game that has you picking up rubbish should be shot, stuffed into a suitcase and hurled into the sea.

V-RALLY 3 — 68
ATARI ■ NGC/82
Speedy rallying game that wouldn't be so much of a drag if they'd concentrated on the basics first. Like, er, the steering.

VIRTUA STRIKER 3 V2002 — 55
ATARI ■ NGC/69
Nice to look at, horrible to play. Rubbish AI and unwieldy controls make for a bobbins game of footie.

WALLACE & GROMIT IN PROJECT ZOO — 70
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/87
Recreates the plasticene duo's flexible world brilliantly. Only a few fiddly sections let this youngsters' platformer down.

WARIO WORLD — 86
NINTENDO ■ NGC/83
The purple-nosed anti-Mario gets his own game. A funtastic, surreal frenzy of lowbrow humour and monster-hitting. Waah!

WORMS BLAST — 63
UBI SOFT ■ NGC/74
Annelids go to war (again). Kinda like *Bust-a-Move* in a puzzly-action kind of way, except this isn't anywhere near as good.

WRECKLESS THE YAKUZA MISSIONS — 51
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
Drive around like a lunatic and smash up cars and anything else that gets in your way. Sub-*Burnout* road-accident nonsense.

WWE CRUSH HOUR — 43
THQ ■ NGC/83
Those magnificent greasy men drive magnificent greasy fighting machines for some unlikely *Vigilante 8*-style 'thrills'.

WWE WRESTLEMANIA X8 — 70
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72
Okay wrestler, but with nothing particularly new and a way-too-familiar engine. But if you insist on buying these things…

WWE WRESTLEMANIA XIX — 68
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/85
Clumsy interface, limited CAW parts and irritating Story mode. Still, it'll sell by the shedload, no matter what its flaws are.

XGRA — 71
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/89
Not-too-bad future racer, hampered by the fact that it's come out at nearly the same time as the superior *F-Zero GX*.

XIII — 86
UBI SOFT ■ NGC/88
A flawed gem of a shooter. Rock-hard in places, with wonderful set pieces and brilliant comic-book-style graphics.

X-MEN: NEXT DIMENSION — 55
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
Duller than dishwater. Fighting-by-numbers stuff that offers very little of interest. Total waste of a pretty cool licence, too.

X-MEN 2 WOLVERINE'S REVENGE — 64
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/82
Is he a man? Is he a wolf? Is he a genetically engineered super-soldier with hillbilly hair? Fighting with the clawed X-Man.

ZOOCUBE — 50
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/71
Puzzle game involving a rotating mouth that sucks animal genitals and goes 'moo', 'oink', 'roar', 'quack' and 'wah!'



YOUR OWN PLACE

Fed up of living with your parents or in a grotty rented dig? Had enough of your dead-end town? Well, lucky you: some of the finest houses and apartments known to man and mushroom are up for sale.

PROPERTYWEEKLY, Thursday January 20th

MUSHROOM PROPERTY

Your up-to-the-minute investment, sales and letting guide. Published almost every Thursday.

Sunny side up

Spotlighting winter sunshine second homes in beautiful Isle Delfino, your parasol paradise.



ONCE AGAIN it's the time of year when slippedy-slidey ice worlds are the order of the season. Time to wrap up warm, throw another fireball or two into the hearth and dream of glorious sunshine, crystal clear waters, palm trees and blinding sandstorms.

For those with a little money put by for just such a rainy day, this is also the ideal time to pick up a fabulous holiday home at considerably less than the peak season market value.

Whether it's a converted cabana on the ever-popular Gelato Beach or a luxurious apartment in the exclusive Plaza district, Isle Delfino has the widest range of properties to suit all tastes and most budgets.

Specialist agency **Gelatopartments Inc** is currently offering a beach-front villa, barely a hop, skip and a jump from the water's edge, for a mere 28k.

Conveniently situated for access to Gelato Beach's spectacular clifftop pathways, the villa boasts accomodation for up to 40 people, so long as they don't have any excessive requirements regarding personal space.

Wildlife lovers will adore the beach area's flocks of giant beaky things, and if you're very lucky you'll run into a train-sized caterpillar or two as well.

If you prefer somewhere less sunny but equally warm, **Mr Fairy & Co** has some superb special offers available in friendly, fiery Pianta Village.

Located just a short journey across the island, the village nestles prettily atop teetering mushrooms, many hundreds of yards tall. This, coupled with the burning-hot lava which flows at great speed through the streets, means that while household insurance and mortgages are not normally available in this area, cheapness abounds.

Prices start at less than 10k, so you'd better put your skates on – these bargain homes are not going to be around for long!

Investors seeking a great deal in an up-and-coming area need look no further than Ricco Harbour, which is handily close to the island's shipping terminal and toxic waste loading facility.

Expanding property speculator **Honest Wario** is in the process of redeveloping part of the upper harbour area, converting a derelict one-bedroom flat into seven stylish studio apartments.

The apartments are separated by Japanese-style paper screen walls, for a fashionably individual touch that's sure to be the envy of your new neighbours.

Communal bathroom and kitchen facilities are available in the kebab shop downstairs, although potential buyers should be aware that the narrow aperture of the toilet is, of course, only suitable for 'number ones'. In this traditional neighbourhood, solid waste is disposed of in the time-honoured manner – by throwing it from an outside window (the apartments have one shared window suitable for this purpose) and yelling "Gardeloo!" "Heads up, people!" or "Stop! Hammer time!"

The apartments will be available in just a few weeks, and they're expected to be snapped up as soon as they hit the market. Wario advises booking a reservation for an immediate viewing. Prices will range from just 19k for a luxury studio to 46k for the 'Emperor Suite' (the one with the window).

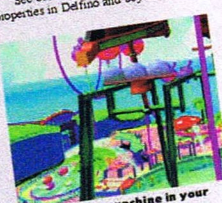
If you're as much a *fun*-lover as you are a *sun*-lover, then you'll positively adore the *funshine* apartments in action-packed Pinna Park, offered by long-established agent **Mr Fairy & Co**.

Situated inside the grounds of this enchanting monument to state-of-the-art high-jinks, Pinna Heights is blessed with a panoramic view over the entire theme park. Purchase one of these exclusive homes and you'll spend happy days watching thrill-seekers soar through the clear blue skies, flung from the beltless seats of the world's most 'extreme' rollercoaster.

All residents qualify for a free off-peak park ticket, valid for all attractions including the legendary Wee-heel of Death ferris wheel – accessible via jet pack or a pleasant afternoon's mountaineering.

Properties are sold only on a rolling daily lease, and as such are frequently available. Personal injury waiver forms must be signed before viewing, and all contracts include emergency medical insurance and funeral costs. Priced from just 14k, this is an ideal opportunity to revisit childhood memories.

See our ad pages for more superb properties in Delfino and beyond.



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…r business is my pleasure

…NGLE

…efits from an …ure, banana …ews of the …o swing on and …ich to fling

…DE: 299



RACCOON FOREST

Intriguing, spacious property with own underground genetics lab. Small number of rooms accessible now, many hours of fun trying to unlock the rest. Large garden with graveyard, cute wildlife, outbuilding c/w mutant horror.

P.O.A.



SURFTON

Former woodland home, now sited in 20 acres of barren, deforested land thanks to a mindless act of vandalism a year or two ago. Neighbours long since moved away, so the entire area is yours if you can find Paul's memory card.

FREE TO THE RIGHT PERSON



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P.O.A.

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PRICE GUIDE: 1,000



KAKARIKO VILLAGE

Stone-built cottage in popular location. Extensive accomodation incl large sleeping area, traditional kitchen, chicken house. Ideal for Skulltula enthusiasts, convenient access to Death Mountain and beyond.

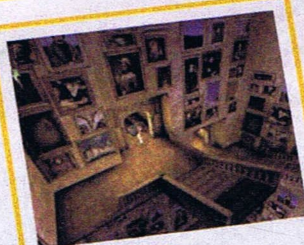
PRICE GUIDE: 12,000



GORON CITY

Studio-style cave. Integrated bedroom/bathroom/kitchen/reception. Ready supply of edible rocks; local amenities include excellent bomb shops. Five mins roll from Dodongo's Cavern, horse trail to Central Hyrule.

PRICE GUIDE: 800



HOGWARTS

Large four-poster bed in a dormitory shared by six schoolboys. Would suit outgoing, exhibitionist lady who would like a chance to mother some gifted children, and isn't shy about getting undressed in front of young boys.

WE'LL PAY YOU IN SWEETS



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An attractive and totally unique second home for the right buyer. Accessible only by boat, footbridge to main island with only one other dwelling. Tropical fruit trees, private dock, sunny weather all year round.

PRICE GUIDE: 9,000



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My name is:
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"Early viewing recommended"

MUSHROOM PROPERTY WEEKLY, Thursday January 20th



MR FAIRY & CO.

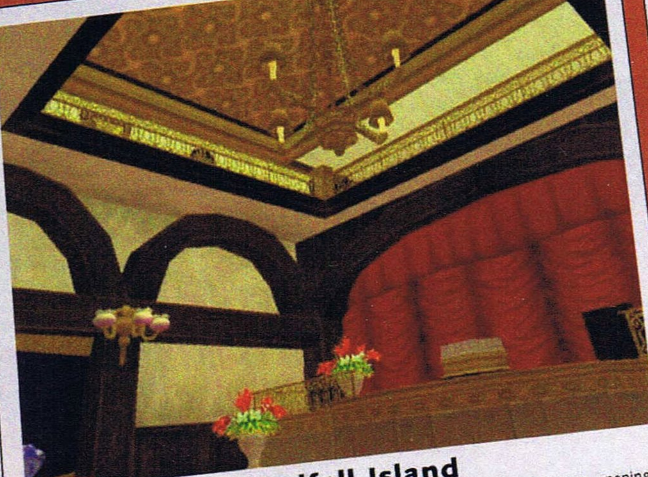
BESPOKE PROPERTY DEALERS



NGC Town

A deceptively spacious one-room dwelling in a very friendly town, enjoying easy access to local rail and hardware store. Stylish bamboo flooring throughout, furnished with single bed, good hi-fi, NES console, bookshelves and Tall Timpanoid. Hard-drinking Irish neighbour forces sale.

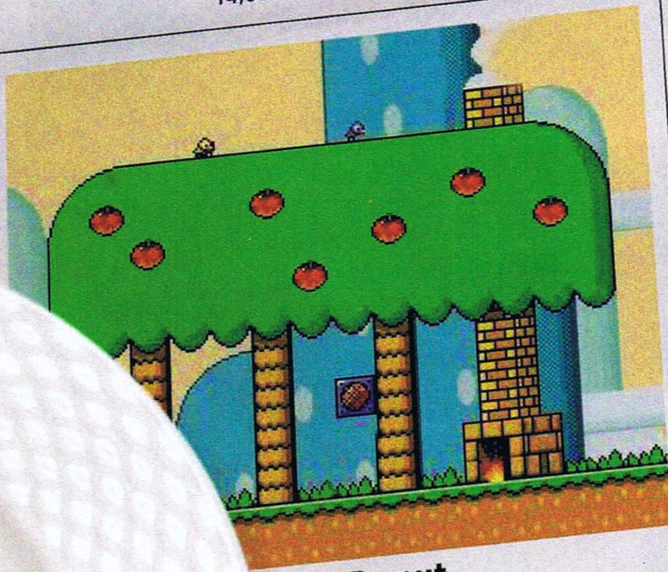
14,000 Offers invited



Windfall Island

Opulent former auction house set over two storeys. Large gallery on ground floor, opening into feature atrium with chandelier and gilded railings above. An unassumingly modest front door hides a property with great potential for redevelopment as flats, offices, retail premises, football stadium etc.

80,000 NO CHAIN



'pper Donut

-bedroom cottage features gas central heating, a recently incubator/nursery for dinosaur eggs, with potential for rsion into a granny annexe. eet parking for two Yoshis, generous garden.

ice guide: 22,000



Central Mushroom Kingdom

Large castle, 4,000+ rooms, in need of some renovation. Spacious lobby with built-in sun, plenty of stairs, secret slides, portals to other worlds etc. Exterior drawbridge over moat leading to warp pipe, Kingdom and private go-kart track (no longer used). Nothing much to see on roof. Priced for quick sale.

Price guide: 22 million

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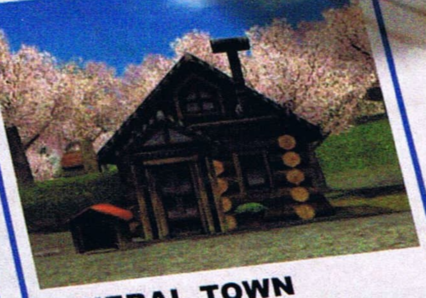
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P.O.A.



OUTSET ISLAND
Life's a beach.
Idyllic detached house with large reception / kitchen, raised sleeping area. Mature front garden with spectacular beach view, leading to shared jetty. Mooring for one boat. Hills and woodland nearby. Pigs. Nearest shops just two days' journey by sea. Early viewing recommended.

OFFERS



MINERAL TOWN
Home on the range.
Farmhouse, outbuildings and grounds in the heart of a thriving and friendly community. Ready for immediate use but will benefit from renovation and improvements. Building materials already on site, suit unattached male with a liking for animals and a keen eye for the ladies.

OFFERS



WINDFALL ISLAND
Having a blast
This former bomb shop stands in approx one acre of unspoiled pasture, enjoying panoramic sea views and convenient proximity to Windfall's fashionable retail district. Period features including 'secret' rear entrance. A small amount of bomb disposal may be required.

OFFERS



RHODE ISLAND
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PRICE GUIDE: 13,000

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DON'T MISS...



A special Compendium this month. Celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Famicom! P110

CONTENTS

A concise guide to the informative guts within...

△ CONFLICT GIVEAWAY: Win night vision equipment like the American Special Forces use!

△ MARIO KART TIPS: Give your mates the hammering they so soundly deserve with our multiplayer guide.



BE THE MULTIPLAYER CHAMP IN

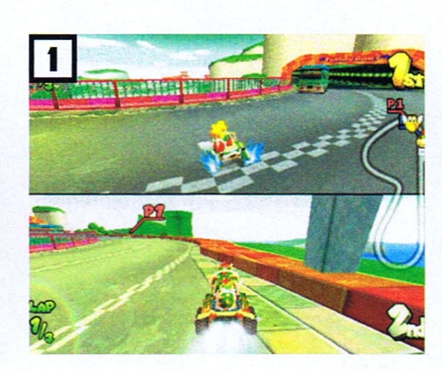
MARIO KART DOUBLE DASH



WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?



To be the best, you've got to beat the rest… or perhaps unplug their Wavebirds. However, dishing out a sound smacking to your mates is the more satisfying option, and that's what we're going to teach you to do. So read this carefully, learn all the tricks, and then hide this issue. Or you could pull these pages out and eat them. You can't be too careful, you know.









NGC READER KNOWLEDGE!

Start powersliding early and you'll be able to get round corners more tightly, especially if you're using a big, heavy kart. Baby Park's a good track to practice this on.
David Gruber, Norwich

So you've probably spent a week rattling through the Grand Prixs and considerably longer thrashing our Time Trial records. However, the odds are that you've spent most of your time with *Mario Kart* indulging in some hot multiplayer action. But there's more to it than simple enjoyment. There's WINNING AT ALL COSTS. For while each race in *Double Dash* may seem like an unpredictable lottery as soon as the shells start flying, there are plenty of tips to help you win, win, win! And crush your so-called 'friends' as you would an ant or cockroach. Enjoy!

1. DOUGHNUTS!

Invariably something's going to make you face the wrong way. Rather than spend valuable seconds reversing, turning and getting stuck, simply hold L and R together, push the joystick to one side and hit the accelerator to spin on the spot.

2. ROGER DODGER

Popular wisdom has it that it's impossible to avoid a blue shell. Wrong! There are two ways to get rid of one – and they also work on red shells if you're out of green shells or bananas. The first tactic is to drive into a wall and bounce off it just as the bluey is about to hit. It can't turn quite as sharply as it would like and so should – fingers crossed – get snagged on the wall. The second, more reliable, method is to go into a powerslide when you get the little on-screen warning and then, just at the moment before bluey-arse interfacing, do a Secret Corner Turbo a la Matt Coxhill's tip on p93. You'll boost off, foxing the bluey. Classy.

3. BOOST, BOOST, BOOST!

The rough-and-tumble of multiplayer games might appear to rule out any pretence at proper racing skills, but nothing could be further from the truth. Race exactly as you would in a Time Trial; corner turbo wherever possible and take the best racing line. Every second counts when you've been hit by a fusillade of red shells.

4. LAST PLACE FIRST

There's one caveat to our above advice, though; don't go immediately into first place. Your first instinct when you start a race will be to go for the turbo start. Don't. Whoever ends up in fourth will annihilate you with a killer power-up almost immediately. Stay at the back of the pack but as near to the rest of the karts as you can get – this way you'll be guaranteed a juicy power-up and you won't be too far away from first place.

5. POWERED-UP

Always make sure both power-up slots are full. Switching characters can help you here – it's



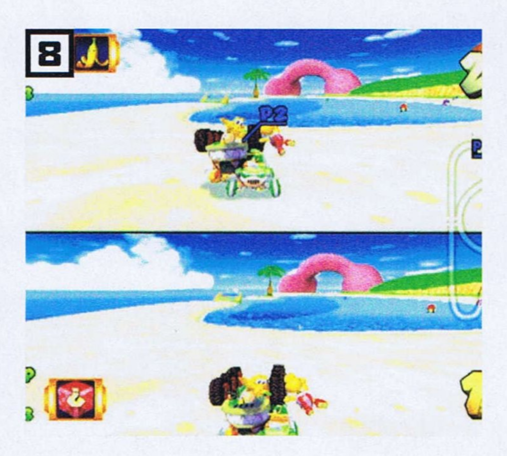
WHAT WE SAID IN ISSUE 88!

Sweeps all of those weak copycats into the dustbin with one expertly timed powerslide. Forget everything you thought you knew, and get with Double Dash. There's still nobody else out there fit to drive in Mario's slipstream.











not just a tool for getting the power-ups you want. Obviously picking up a double power-up fills both slots; if you've only picked a single one up, though, swap characters around so you're holding it in front, allowing the rearmost character to pick up a second power-up. If you're absurdly dextrous you can powerslide through a gaggle of single power-ups and come out with two…

6. WHO TO CHOOSE?

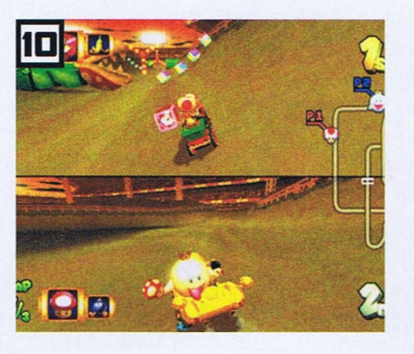
You'll obviously have your own favourite characters in *Double Dash*, but in multiplayer games there are two utterly important things to consider when selecting drivers and a car. First, heavier characters' cars can bash lighter vehicles out of the way, and second, lighter characters can accelerate more quickly from a dead stop. These two points are more important than anything else, character-wise, so who you choose really depends on whether you're an offensive barge-the-enemy-out-of-the-way-type karter or if you rely more on driving skills and recovering quickly from shell impacts. In the **NGC** office we don't generally rely on middle-of-the-road characters and vehicles (stand up, Mario) as while they might miss out on the disadvantages of the lighter and heavier vehicles, they more importantly possess none of the advantages either.

7. LOOKING AT OTHERS' SCREENS

A shockingly unsportsmanlike tip, this, but *Mario Kart* has always seemingly been designed with looking at opponents' screens in mind. Taking a quick glance at the other racers' screens allows you to choose the optimum moment to unleash, say, red shells, but conversely gives the target player time to react as they see you fire one off. With items like the blue shell, which erupts with a giant, explosive area-effect, looking at the other players' screens means you can time your shot – essential if you want to catch more than the lead player in the blast. Sneaky, that.

8. TACTICS THAT NO LONGER WORK

Double Dash has, in some ways, been dumbed down compared to earlier *Mario Karts* to allow even novices to be in with a chance, and some cruel tactics of yesteryear no longer work. Shelling (or using a lightning on) someone just as they go over a jump (such as the leap just before the finish line on Waluigi Raceway) no longer sees them tumbling below to an earlier part of the track; they simply get replaced on the jump. Don't hoard your items for just such an opportunity – it won't work.



9. GOLDEN RULE 1

The golden rule, this: if you can dodge a red or blue shell and you're out of green shells or bananas, simply brake and get behind whoever's in second place. Voila! They'll now be on the receiving end of some power-up justice.

10. GOLDEN RULE 2

Always, *always* drop a fakey item box in among proper item boxes. Nobody is going to try and pick one up if it's sitting there all on its own (although it can be worth 'mining' a narrow area of track).



ENTER TODAY!

Prove your *Mario Kart* skills by sending us your Time Trial times for the first four cups. Below are the current leaderboards. **We need video evidence of your Time Trial records as proof** (see p103 for how to do this). At the end, all the individual course winners will be rewarded, with the overall winner (the person occupying most first places) receiving the Championship Cup.

WE SET YOU THE CHALLENGE – NOW WE'RE RAISING THE STAKES. HAVE YOU GOT THE SKILLZ TO TAKE ON THE GANG?

MUSHROOM KINGDOM KART CHAMPIONSHIP

COMPETITION CLOSES WEDS 3RD MARCH Your tape must reach us by then or it won't count!

THE LEADERBOARD

MONTH 3: SPEEDING AHEAD

MUSHROOM CUP

LUIGI CIRCUIT

1 **Bart Savelkouls** Netherlands	1:19:500
2 **Lee Woodward** Worthing	1:21:954
3 **Jamie Stirzaker** Kirkham	1:22:770
4 **John Potter** Essex	1:23:947
5 **Matt Dyson** Southampton	1:24:065
6 **Dave Every** Ellesmere Port	1:24:293
7 **Shaun Barker** Bristol	1:24:615
8 **Jonas Pettersson** Sweden	1:24:687
9 **Andrew Mills** Dundee	1:24:775
10 **Bill Tansley** Horsham	1:25:345

PEACH BEACH

1 **Bart Savelkouls** Netherlands	1:11:797
2 **Dave Every** Ellesmere Port	1:15:488
3 **Jamie Stirzaker** Kirkham	1:17:229
4 **Stephen Cue** Slough	1:17:380
5 **Andrew Mills** Dundee	1:17:523
6 **Jonas Pettersson** Sweden	1:17:556
7 **John Potter** Essex	1:17:654
8 **Shaun Barker** Bristol	1:18:195
9 **Bill Tansley** Horsham	1:18:294
10 **Jamie Nixon** Glasgow	1:19:301

BABY PARK

1 **Bill Tansley** Horsham	1:07:622
2 **Bart Savelkouls** Netherlands	1:07:688
3 **Jim Fadden** Horsham	1:08:656
4 **Jamie Stirzaker** Kirkham	1:09:443
5 **John Potter** Essex	1:09:604
6 **Jon Dennett** Horsham	1:09:913
7 **Andrew Mills** Dundee	1:10:236
8 **Darren Bolton** No fixed abode	1:10:655
9 **Dave Every** Ellesmere Port	1:10:714
10 **Gerald Womack** Who knows?	1:11:044

DRY DRY DESERT

1 **Bart Savelkouls** Netherlands	1:37:265
2 **Jamie Stirzaker** Kirkham	1:48:744
3 **Dave Every** Ellesmere Port	1:49:241
4 **Jonas Pettersson** Sweden	1:49:607
5 **John Potter** Essex	1:49:763
6 **Bill Tansley** Horsham	1:50:846
7 **Stephen Cue** Slough	1:52:725
8 **Oliver Howlett** Cheltenham	1:52:996
9 **Jon Dennett** Horsham	1:53:114
10 **Jamie Nixon** Glasgow	1:53:593

FLOWER CUP

MUSHROOM BRIDGE

1 **Bart Savelkouls** Netherlands	1:23:832
2 **Jamie Stirzaker** Kirkham	1:28:352
3 **Bill Tansley** Horsham	1:28:898
4 **Shaun Barker** Bristol	1:29:703
5 **Andrew Mills** Dundee	1:29:966
6 **Dave Every** Ellesmere Port	1:30:643
7 **Stephen Cue** Slough	1:30:759
8 **Oliver Howlett** Cheltenham	1:31:746
9 **Matthew Pellett** Spalding	1:32:181
10 **Jonas Pettersson** Sweden	1:32:644

MARIO CIRCUIT

1 **John Potter** Essex	1:31:321
2 **Bart Savelkouls** Netherlands	1:31:570
3 **Jamie Stirzaker** Kirkham	1:38:032
4 **Bill Tansley** Horsham	1:38:446
5 **Dave Every** Ellesmere Port	1:38:923
6 **Jonas Pettersson** Sweden	1:40:434
7 **Darren Bolton** No fixed abode	1:41:296
8 **Oliver Howlett** Cheltenham	1:41:666
9 **Stephen Cue** Slough	1:41:950
10 **Andrew Mills** Dundee	1:42:205

DAISY CRUISER

1 **Bart Savelkouls** Netherlands	1:43:944
2 **Jamie Stirzaker** Kirkham	1:49:679
3 **Oliver Howlett** Cheltenham	1:50:326
4 **Bill Tansley** Horsham	1:50:557
5 **Stephen Cue** Slough	1:51:694
6= **John Potter** Essex	1:51:992
6= **Dave Every** Ellesmere Port	1:51:992
7 **Jonas Pettersson** Sweden	1:53:170
8 **Jamie Nixon** Glasgow	1:55:504
9 **Ewan McKenzie** Dumfries	1:56:017

WALUIGI STADIUM

1 **Bill Tansley** Horsham	1:45:884
2 **Bart Savelkouls** Netherlands	1:46:035
3 **Dave Every** Ellesmere Port	1:52:922
4 **Oliver Howlett** Cheltenham	1:55:488
5 **Jamie Stirzaker** Kirkham	1:55:900
6 **Matthew Pellett** Spalding	1:56:156
7 **Jonas Pettersson** Sweden	1:56:383
8 **Stephen Cue** Slough	1:56:565
9 **Andrew Mills** Dundee	1:57:105
10 **Jim Fadden** Horsham	1:57:429

STAR CUP

SHERBERT LAND

1 **Bart Savelkouls** Netherlands	1:19:285
2 **Jamie Stirzaker** Kirkham	1:21:994
3 **Bill Tansley** Horsham	1:23:194
4 **Jonas Pettersson** Sweden	1:23:977
5 **Stephen Cue** Slough	1:24:683
6 **John Potter** Essex	1:24:699
7 **Dave Every** Ellesmere Port	1:25:431
8 **Matthew Pellett** Spalding	1:25:975
9 **Jamie Nixon** Glasgow	1:26:060
10 **Oliver Howlett** Cheltenham	1:26:188

MUSHROOM CITY

1 **Bart Savelkouls** Netherlands	1:41:228
2 **Jamie Stirzaker** Kirkham	1:46:340
3 **Andrew Mills** Dundee	1:46:700
4 **Dave Every** Ellesmere Port	1:47:655
5 **Jonas Pettersson** Sweden	1:47:975
6 **Bill Tansley** Horsham	1:48:155
7 **Oliver Howlett** Cheltenham	1:48:655
8 **Matthew Pellett** Spalding	1:49:072
9 **Stephen Cue** Slough	1:49:752
10 **John Potter** Essex	1:50:406

YOSHI CIRCUIT

1 **Bart Savelkouls** Netherlands	1:46:888
2 **Andrew Mills** Dundee	1:51:702
3 **Jamie Stirzaker** Kirkham	1:53:439
4 **Bill Tansley** Horsham	1:54:119
5 **Dave Every** Ellesmere Port	1:54:141
6 **Jonas Pettersson** Sweden	1:56:307
7 **Oliver Howlett** Cheltenham	1:56:642
8 **Stephen Cue** Slough	1:57:750
9 **Matthew Pellett** Spalding	1:59:009
10 **Darren Bolton** No fixed abode	1:59:048

DK MOUNTAIN

1 **Bart Savelkouls** Netherlands	1:56:506
2 **Dave Every** Ellesmere Port	1:58:531
3 **Oliver Howlett** Cheltenham	2:00:058
4 **Jonas Pettersson** Sweden	2:03:855
5 **Gary Roberts** Woodley	2:05:685
6 **Bill Tansley** Horsham	2:09:659
7 **Patrick King** Coventry	2:11:190
8 **Stephen Cue** Slough	2:11:757
9 **John Potter** Essex	2:12:303
10 **Jamie Stirzaker** Kirkham	2:13:357

SPECIAL CUP

WARIO COLOSSEUM

1 **Bart Savelkouls** Netherlands	2:07:410
2 **Dave Every** Ellesmere Port	2:15:334
3 **Jamie Stirzaker** Kirkham	2:16:156
4 **Oliver Howlett** Cheltenham	2:17:766
5 **Jonas Pettersson** Sweden	2:17:790
6 **Stephen Cue** Slough	2:18:835
7 **John Potter** Essex	2:18:886
8 **Jamie Nixon** Glasgow	2:20:672
9 **Bill Tansley** Horsham	2:21:685
10 **Matthew Pellett** Spalding	2:21:935

DINO DINO JUNGLE

1 **Bart Savelkouls** Netherlands	1:50:186
2 **Oliver Howlett** Cheltenham	1:58:649
3 **Dave Every** Ellesmere Port	1:59:693
4 **Jonas Pettersson** Sweden	1:59:746
5 **Stephen Cue** Slough	2:00:369
6 **Bill Tansley** Horsham	2:00:413
7 **Jamie Stirzaker** Kirkham	2:00:594
8 **John Potter** Essex	2:00:660
9 **Gary Roberts** Woodley	2:04:265
10 **Andrew Mills** Dundee	2:04:990

BOWSER'S CASTLE

1 **Bart Savelkouls** Netherlands	2:29:899
2 **Dave Every** Ellesmere Port	2:35:560
3 **Jamie Stirzaker** Kirkham	2:38:945
4 **Jonas Pettersson** Sweden	2:39:690
5 **Stephen Cue** Slough	2:40:969
6 **Oliver Howlett** Cheltenham	2:41:781
7 **Andrew Mills** Dundee	2:43:135
8 **Bill Tansley** Horsham	2:43:229
9 **John Potter** Essex	2:44:139
10 **Jamie Nixon** Glasgow	2:45:262

RAINBOW ROAD

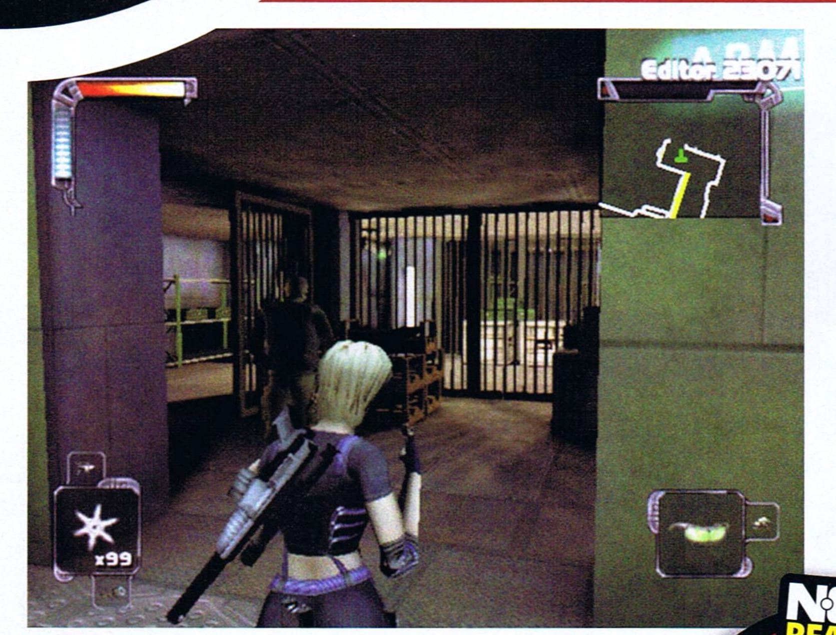
1 **Bart Savelkouls** Netherlands	3:08:123
2 **Jonas Pettersson** Sweden	3:12:985
3 **Oliver Howlett** Cheltenham	3:13:110
4 **Stephen Cue** Slough	3:13:428
=5 **Dave Every** Ellesmere Port	3:14:717
=5 **Shaun Barker** Bristol	3:14:717
6 **Jamie Stirzaker** Kirkham	3:15:342
7 **John Potter** Essex	3:15:907
8 **Bill Tansley** Horsham	3:15:977
9 **Gary Roberts** Woodley	3:16:737

Send all entries to: Mushroom Kingdom Kart Champ. **NGC** 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW

NGC GUARANTEE
TIPS, CHEATS
PROBLEMS SOLVED
EVERYTHING
YOU NEED!

THE TIPS YOU NEED FOR THE GAMES YOU'RE PLAYING...

TIPS EXTRA





ROGUE OPS

UNLIMITED HEALTH
Pause the game, then press Left, Right, Right, Left, Left, Right, Right, Left, Left, Right, Right, Left, X, X.

UNLIMITED SPY CAM
Pause the game, then press Left, Left, Right, Right, L, L, R, R, X, X, Y, Y.

1/2 DAMAGE
Pause the game, then press X, X, Y, Y, Left, Left, Right, Right, Y, Y, X, X.

UNLIMITED AMMO
Pause the game, then press X, Y, X, Y, X, Y, X, Y, Left, Y, X, Y, X, Y, X, Y, X.

FIERY CROSSBOW
Pause the game, then press Left, Right, Right, Left, X, Y, R, L, X, Y, Left, Right.

CROSSBOW MISSILES
Pause the game, then press Right, Right, Left, Left, R, R, L, L, Y, Y, X, X.

SNIPER EXPLOSIVES
Pause the game, then press in the following code: R, L, Right, Right, Left, Left, Right, Right, L, R, X, Y.

SNIPER MISSILES
Pause the game, then press X, Left, Right, R, L, Right, X, L, L, R, Left, Left.

BIG FEET
Pause the game, then press in this code: Right, Right, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Left, Left.

SKELETON MODE
Pause the game, then press Left, Left, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, Right, Right.

SKIP LEVEL
Pause the game, then press R, X, R, Y, R, Left, R, Right, R, L, L, X, L, Y, L, Left, L, Right, X.

HUGE GUN
Pause the game, then press X, X, X, X, Y, Y.

NO BULLET DAMAGE
Pause the game, then press Left, Right, Right, Left, X, Y, Y, X.

ONE-SHOT KILLS
Pause the game, then press Y, Left, Right, Right, Left, Y, R, L, Y, X, X.

UNLIMITED TOC
Pause the game, then press Y, Y, X, X, Left, Right, Right, Left, R, L, R.

COMPLETE LEVEL: BANK
Pause the game, then press L, R, X, Y, Left, L, Left, Left, X, Y, X.

NGC READER KNOWLEDGE!

In 1080° Avalanche, you might think that opening up the super-fast boards like Mr Beaks will help you thrash those time trial records. Wrong! The game won't save results gained from those boards.
Donny Gee, Doncaster

XGRA

ALL TRACKS
To unlock every track in the game, enter WIBBLE as a code at the cheat screen. A sound will confirm that you have entered the code correctly.

UNLOCK RACING LEVELS
To get your paws on these levels, enter FREEPLAY as a code when you're at the cheat screen. A sound will confirm that you've entered the code correctly.

O2 LIVERIED
Enter UCANDO as a code at the cheat screen. A sound will confirm that you've entered the code correctly.

PROGRAMMER MESSAGES
Enter MUNCHKIN, EDDROOLZ, or EDDIEPOO as a code at the cheat screen. A sound will confirm correct code entry. A message from the programmers will appear at the end of the credits sequence.

TEMPLAR
Fancy a bit of this, do you? Successfully complete Season mode, winning in first place every time and completing all the objectives and it's yours.

GOTCHA FORCE

SOLO BATTLES
Successfully complete the game to fight battles that you normally fight with partners by yourself instead.

SPECIAL OPTION
Successfully complete the game twice to unlock the 'Special' option in Story mode. You can use this option to replay any Story mode battle.

NEO G RED
Successfully complete the game two times to unlock Neo G Red.

BLUE G RED
Successfully complete the game four times to unlock a blue-coloured G Red.

CRYSTAL G RED
Successfully complete the game five times to unlock a crystal G Red.

SILVER G RED
Successfully complete the game six times to unlock a silver-coloured G Red.

GOLD G RED
Successfully complete the game seven times to unlock a gold-coloured G Red.

SILHOUETTE G RED
Successfully complete the game eight times to unlock a silhouette G Red.

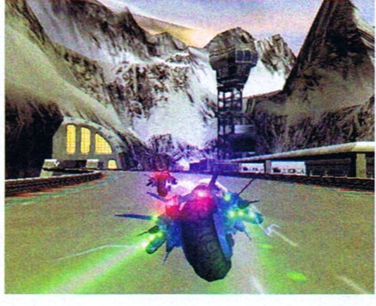
SHADOW NEO G RED
Successfully complete the game – you'll never guess – nine times to unlock Shadow Neo G Red.

HINT: WIRE GIRL – RETRACT MOVE
Press X twice to retract Wire Girl through anchor points.

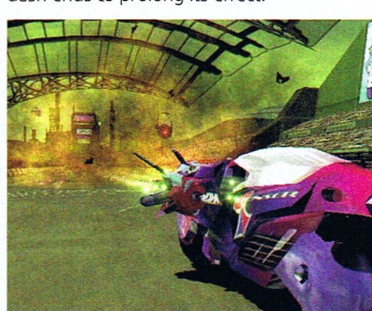
HINT: ACCELERATION NINJA – BONUS ATTACKS
Jump into enemies and your Borg will do them extra damage.

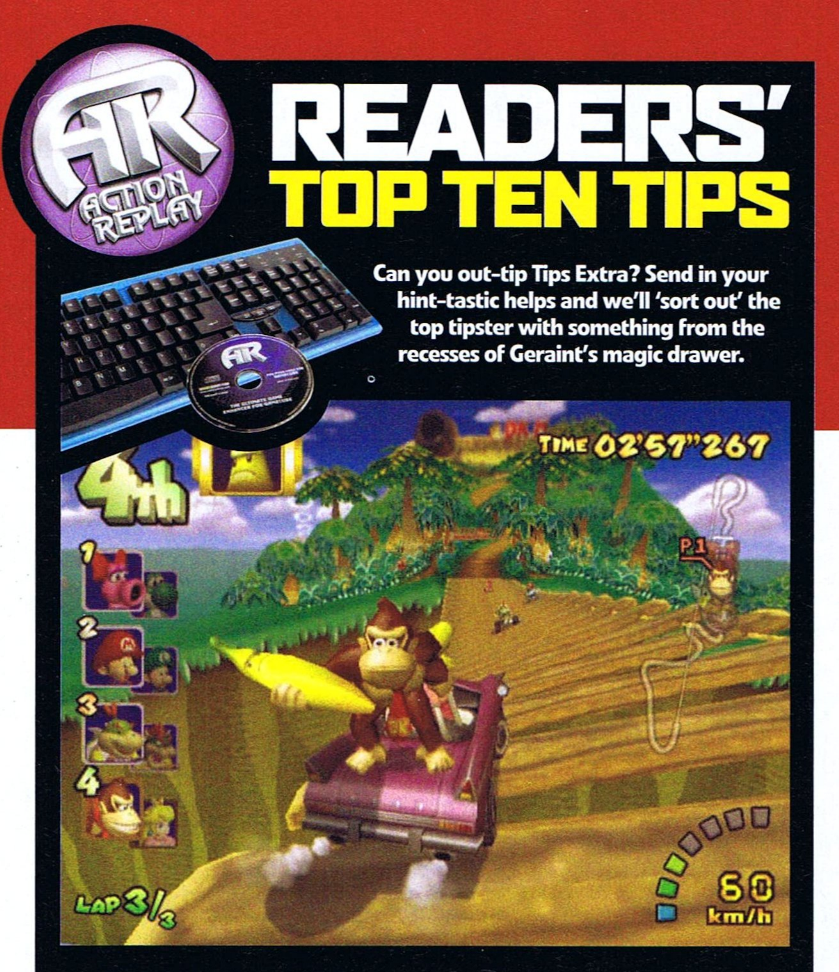
HINT: SUPER JUMP
Jump, then hold the analogue stick forward to dash in that direction. Jump and hold the analogue stick forward again either just before the jump ends or just before the dash ends to prolong its effect.











Can you out-tip Tips Extra? Send in your hint-tastic helps and we'll 'sort out' the top tipster with something from the recesses of Geraint's magic drawer.

1. MARIO KART: DD!!

Dodge!

To avoid a red shell – or even, sometimes, a blue shell – with ease, do a powerslide as soon as the warning appears. Turn your engine smoke blue and get ready to turbo. Use it at the last second before the shell hits and it will hopefully miss you.
Matt Coxhill, Buckingham

2. THE HULK

Boss help
To defeat Madman, grab him, then do the move where Hulk snaps his enemy on his shoulders twice then drops him onto his knee. This'll give you time to damage the nearest generator. When the generators are destroyed, chuck Madman into the electrical field.
Chris Allies, Hayes

3. VIEWTIFUL JOE

Punch out!
To enhance your punching power, zoom in and hold L and R simultaneously; when you punch, hold down Y so Joe automatically continues to punch, then watch as your enemies crumble!
Adam Gado, Redcar

4. POKÉMON R/S

Pokémania
To catch unlimited Pokémon in the safari zone, get the TM Sweet Scent and stand in a patch of grass. Use Sweet Scent and a Pokémon will appear. Do this until you find the one you want.
David Pearson, Exeter

5. TIMESPLITTERS 2

Going ape
On the Monkey Mayhem level, aim halfway up the doorframe and as monkeys come out of the doorway you can shoot the melons easily.
Michael Stern, Totnes

6. TONY HAWK'S 3

Spooky Skater
On the Suburbia level, go to the haunted house and stay away from the door. When the door opens, skate into it for a surprise. Try it as the Demoness too!
David Wallace, Fife

7. HITMAN 2

Wesley Snipes
On Invitation To A Party, go to the second floor, then to the area on the left that joins the south-west corridor. At the southern wall, check for an 'open door' action. You'll enter a corridor. After this you'll be on the balcony with one guard, a party guest outfit and a W2000 rifle – perfect for sniping.
Dominic Egan, Leigh-on-Sea

8. SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE

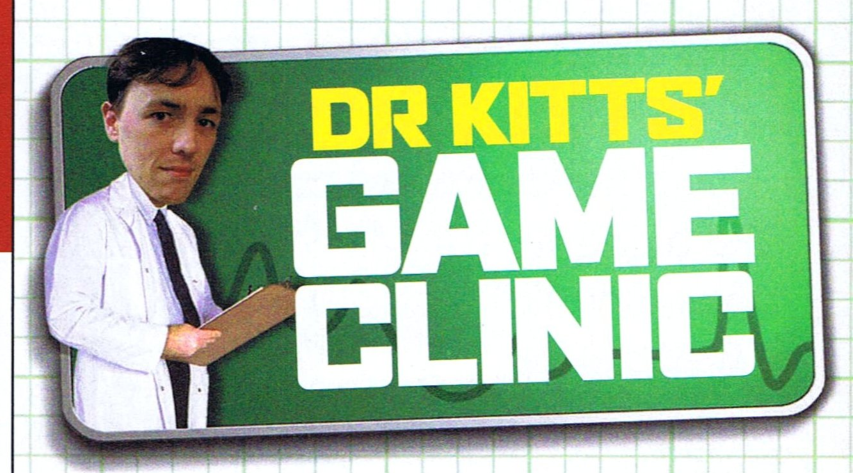
Fruitful
Want to leave Yoshi by himself and go and explore without him running out of juice? Place Yoshi next to a fruit and he'll keep munching it while you go off.
Dave Pugh, Saffron Walden

9. THE SIMS

Shiny Happy People
In the Sims, when your Sims' lifestyle is doing badly and he is very annoyed, evict him from the house! Move him back in and he should be happy again.
Chris Utley, Fareham

10. SUPER SMASH BROS.

More Than You Can Chew
In Adventure mode, play as Kirby and use the swallow move on Topis, Polar Bears, Goombas, Koopas, Redeads and Octoroks, then press B or A to kill them!
Michael Heath, Buckingham





He doesn't so much heal people as eviscerate them. But we love him.

Dr Kitts,
Gah! I just can't beat the Black Guardian boss in *Eternal Darkness*! Help me please!
Tony Rolling, Edinburgh

Dr Kitts pokes a lemur's eye with a pencil and chuckles softly to himself.
Well Tony, there are minor differences here depending on which alignment you chose at the start of the game, but generally the boss can be beaten over three phases. Each of the three phases will see the barrier behind you moving forward – but don't get too close to the Guardian as your magic won't work.

Phase1: Avoid the ranged attacks and cast a three-point Magickal Attack when the beast recharges (you can tell when he's doing this because he glows). Do this three times.

Phase 2: Ignore the zombies – cast a Shield so they can't get you and cast a seven-point Magickal Attack when the Guardian recharges (just after he's summoned said zombies).

Phase 3: You'll be forced to get up close to the Guardian – dodge his attacks and hit him three times again with the three-point Magickal Attack. Simple. Yes? Well, possibly.

Dr Kitts,
What's the point of completing the Gate Challenges and collecting the coins in *1080° Avalanche*?
Terry Zim, Thrallwell

Dr Kitts munches thoughtfully on a cockroach as he idly pulls the wings off a dry roasted moth.
Ah Terry, I do so like a pertinent question. Straight to the point – most admirable, young man, most admirable indeed. Anyway, collecting the coins in Time Trial mode opens up the character's extra snowboards, and you'll find that these are essential if you want to stand half a chance of beating the higher difficulty settings. As for Gate Challenge, beating these opens up the 'wacky' boards, like Mr Beaks the penguin.

Dr Kitts,
How do I unlock the Millennium Falcon in *Rebel Strike*? I completed all the ordinary missions and only got Slave I. I mean, that's all very well, but it's not the Falcon.
Karl Frogmore, Leeds

Dr Kitts decides cruelty to animals is a bad thing, especially when so many people are more deserving of pain.
You have to get bronze on all missions and the bonus one. So there you go. And now I must rest. Goodbye.



More cheats for Mario Kart, plus some sneaky Hobbitry.

MARIO KART DOUBLE DASH!!

Master code
ANZT-AP2Y-0JYEY
KG16-PZFM-223FE

Stars last forever
6TG1-BU7K-MPMPU
Q8GK-9P31-N06KB

Extra speed
DY58-2WK5-AFBXY
V6GW-FKR3-GFJD2
RUUF-39YP-NKKB4

Open characters/courses
QY69-CDCB-ZFCUH
4K9K-ZMEJ-PW3U3

Open all karts
WFDG-1Y43-RQFFE
N9V2-UE4P-2KATU

Stop lap timer (Up on d-pad)
5FXD-E7JT-C45JG
83ED-18N4-KZN6C
GTN1-V5DH-EH8KM

Enable lap timer (Down on d-pad)
89ZQ-RWXK-PJ0QD
RP99-7ADP-AXRND
CM63-06PY-6W8FD

Massive karts
U0VP-9FZ8-XEXM7
NVW9-0F1P-TZ5B2
G6VM-5REV-5WBWZ

Others karts can't move
18ZZ-61VT-R4G6V
8TN9-XXKF-PNDNJ

Tiny karts
R3HP-3UH7-HTBH8
8FX6-DDXA-NW8Z4
G6VM-5REV-5WBWZ

Unrestricted kart selection
8GH5-GJQ8-B622W
NJWQ-J4WZ-7TNQR
2A10-ZY5C-HU0GU
2C72-UN9M-RVPY3
GFXH-MYMK-M4YQ4
UGYC-1JZF-8FGVV
4ZZF-12RK-06DMN
X66P-ME4H-WPJPJ
B02J-1E3J-GM5W3
4UTC-0567-YHYBZ
ZA6K-Q7TM-76KRA
M4WB-GQ1P-5BM2C

THE HOBBIT

Master code
UHDB-PB93-WNQQN
JBZ0-AKFY-TNB84

Infinite rocks
U93D-KA2V-B1NKJ
GRJD-102K-WMUFP

Max courage points/max health
MMKN-T3Z7-8BERV
UE34-601R-68PDK
A7WP-9Z3J-BFHB0

Have maximum silver pennies
JTTB-FPJ3-VCJXA
JU1H-K7AU-5QAJU

Have 100 chests
YUKV-CMTV-HDDDR
RW6V-X9C1-6QV0M

Infinite health potions
NJKQ-TKC7-3XGKU
FFV4-9B4P-E6BZU

Infinite antidote potions
26JA-VBCG-2W2RH
C4PG-YUCM-RY07Z

Infinite Waters Of Vigour
FQTR-89UF-6ZCWB
BGEJ-UCHF-KDYC5

Infinite skeleton keys
FUP7-VQXH-MAPRA
2D57-P201-HWAAK

All walking stick attack medals
0X5B-TD9W-BW0C6
95C8-7JJ0-KYBD7
271A-ACJT-8XTUG
05X0-G6JT-9V7YK

All walking stick jump attack medals
M3MX-9730-1XD94
AKRF-BTWT-5MRHU
N2TR-X23Y-NNRDN
YQ6A-Q086-PAN86

All Sting attack medals
7NEY-1ZA3-X25DZ
BZ9M-FHFN-HRZ3Y
6AU4-1J8F-9XRH6
1N6W-EGQN-CK71U

All Sting jump attack medals
KB8P-GB3H-ZMYH4
J4FW-65ZT-2DR2P
9Q2D-QZC0-XJNJC
0YXE-TNJC-5KGQ1

Have Sting
4VEP-9GK7-3X63R
1CQV-JXBT-412A9

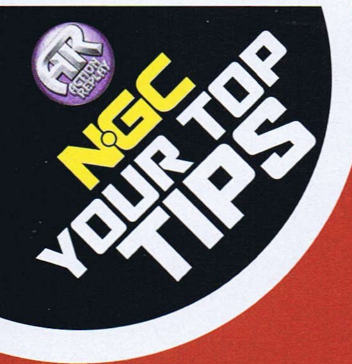
All rock throwing medals
2VKD-DYM6-R1BPD
GYVB-TNV1-TX776
VPUW-3A3P-1CQAT
4KKV-2FCB-61UKQ

Flaming rocks
ZZTK-HBUX-DMVBJ
P14U-2Q1X-ZK9B1









Found an interesting tip, secret or quirky thing in one of your games? Send it into us immediately! Each month we'll stick the best into our Readers' Tips section. If your tip is the number one readers' tip, we'll send you a luvverly prize. Good, huh? But don't send us cheat codes from the net. Quirky!



YOUR TOP TIPS SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE AND BAG YOURSELF A PRIZE...

HERE'S MY TOP TIP...

IT'S FOR

AND THIS IS HOW IT WORKS

Name ....

Address ....

....

....

............Postcode............

Send to:
TIPS EXTRA, **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW or e-mail ngc@futurenet.co.uk

If you don't want to cut up your magazine, send a photocopy instead, and continue on another bit of paper if you run out of room. Or just buy two copies of the mag. That way you can keep a spare copy in the khazi, to help focus your mind.

WIN! CONFLICT DESERT STORM II GEAR

An army marches on its stomach. And you're gonna be Quartermaster.

Military fans rejoice, for SCi's excellent *Conflict Desert Storm II* is actually in the shops right now. Honest! We reviewed the game (and awarded it 90%) back in issue 86, when it was due to be released well before Christmas. Then a bunch of unforeseen delays caused it to slip into February. Ho hum. These things happen.

Anyway, to refresh your memory and compensate for the lengthy wait we've got some top-notch *CDSII* goodies to give away.

The first prize is a copy of the game, a strategy guide, a T-shirt, a pair of walkie-talkies and – get this – a very expensive night vision headset, as used by the Yanks for distinguishing between British convoys and Iraqi missile launchers during Gulf War II. Except this one actually works.

Five runners up will also each receive a copy of the game, the T-shirt and the walkie-talkies.

So how can you win this stuff? Easy. We want you to *design us a special Desert Storm sandwich*. You know, because there's sand in the desert and in wiches too. You can draw it, send us a recipe or whatever.* Use your imagination and send your entries to:

Sandwich of Mass Destruction
NGC Magazine
30 Monmouth Street
Bath
BA1 2BW

If your entry is emailable, send it to the usual address **(ngc@futurenet.co.uk)**
We'll pick the best ones after the closing date (24th March). **HAPPY SANDWICHING!**

*Do NOT send an actual sarnie. Posting week-old egg, tuna or mayo to us will whiff. We'll hunt you down, and you'll be forced to grow a humungous beard and live in a stinking burrow to avoid us.



HERE ARE YOUR ORDERS

- Employees of Future Publishing, SCi and their relatives and any agents involved are ineligible to enter.
- The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- Prizes cannot be exchanged for cash.
- Closing date for entries is 24th March.
- The winners' prizes will be sent out within 28 days of the closing date by the supplier, not Future Publishing Ltd.



AND NOW… WITNESS THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF THESE ARMED AND FULLY OPERATIONAL GAMING LEAGUES!

I'M THE BEST

WIN!

This is the last month for the current challenges. I'm The Best veterans will know what that means – if you place first in a mini-league you get 50 bonus points, second gets 40 and so on. As always, there's a cut-off date, and all the current challenges will close on the 25th March 2004. That means that if your entry arrives after that date, it will not qualify for any bonus points.

We've had some cracking entries for last month's Virtual Reality You, so if you dressed up as a Boo and sent your photo in, look out for next month's issue – you may make it into the pages of the magazine. As a result of last issue's Virtual Reality NO we were overrun with a Hive of Go-Sen robots, complete with whirring blades of death and other attachments, from prediction-making heads to boxes of chocolates. (That sounds like bribery? It tasted like it too. But we don't fall for such things. Only solid, provable, CHEAT-FREE effort will earn you a place in the hallowed halls of I'm The Best.)

So, start playing now and get points before for the next set of challenges is launched. As always, you can post your entry (essential for video-only evidence) or email picture evidence to us. Postal gubbins should be sent to I'm The Best at the usual **NGC** address. Send email to **ngc@futurenet.co.uk** with **ITB:** in the subject line. We look forward to seeing your entry!

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE!

It seems Mission Impossible just isn't, erm, impossible enough for you at the moment is it? We were thinking of upping the stakes a bit, you know, like asking you to scale Ben Nevis in nothing but a g-string with the soles of your feet and the palms of your hands smeared in vaseline. Unfortunately ITB Mistress Mim wouldn't allow it – she's sick of the sight of you prancing around in your g-strings – so much so that she's had trouble keeping her lunch-time Pot Noodle down…

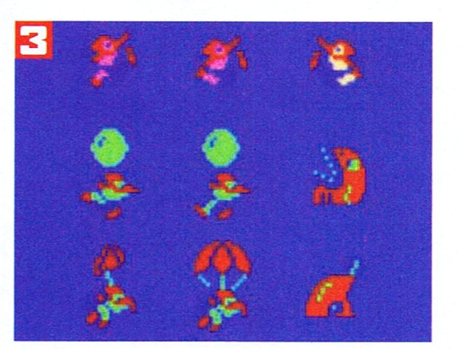
THIS MONTH: PIXEL PERFECTION

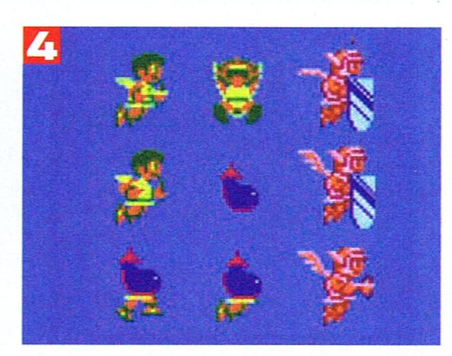
Let's take a trip down memory lane, shall we? That miserable little gaming back-alley where, when you actually go down it, you discover things aren't quite as good as you remember them. (And you can shut up at the back about *anything* not being as good as the NES version…)

This month we want you to take a look at each collection of sprites and tell us which games they came from. Not only that, but we want you to tell us who made the games in question as well as which year the originals came out. Got that? Good. **Send your answers for all four shots by the 25th of March please. Completely correct answers will net the sender 35 points.**



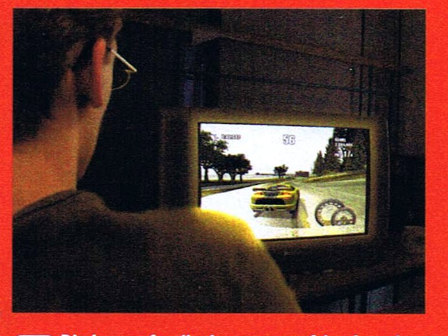






BEAT THE BEST!

Come and have a go if you think they're hard enough! This is how you turn your talent into a shot at a stonking prize.



1 Ditch your family, ignore your friends and practise until you have achieved perfection. But not beyond the cut-off date. That'd be dim.



2 Get a score above our 'To Qualify' minimum – you don't have to beat the top 5. Gather the evidence (video/photo) and send it to us.



3 Wait an issue or two and see where your score gets you. The more challenges you nail, the higher you climb in the table…

I'M THE BEST

The Best just got even Better…

MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!!



TOUR DOMINATOR

WE WANT You to win by as many points as you can on the All Cup Tour.
THE LAW One racer, 150cc. You can pick any characters/vehicles.
TO QUALIFY 30 point lead
EVIDENCE Snap of the final resuts screen.
POINTS 45

1	160 (52pt lead)	Rob Jones, Poole
2	160 (34pt lead)	Christopher Rogers, Greenford
3	158 (50pt lead)	Ewan McKenzie, Dumfries
4	158 (44pt lead)	M. Knowles, Tunbridge Wells
5	158 (40pt lead)	Peter Bottomley, Cheshire

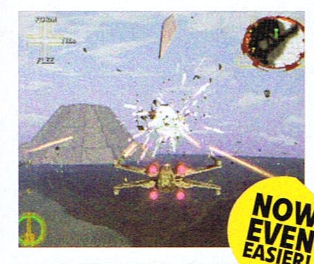
HEAVY RIDER

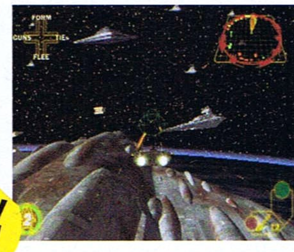
WE WANT Best time on Yoshi Circuit using DK and Bowser
THE LAW Must be in 150cc GP.
TO QUALIFY Time of 2:10:000 with 30 points (20 points from previous two races, +10).
EVIDENCE Video, so we know you're not stopping the timer.
POINTS 30

1	2:03:295	Dave Every, Ellesmere Port
2	2:04:206	Rob Jones, Poole
3	2:04:439	Steve Brooks, Broughton Astley
4	2:06:866	Michael Seaward, Stanley
5	2:07:001	Dominic Stroud, Gloucester

To spice things up a bit, you'll notice that we've also included extra Random Challenges – which can be related to games, or be completely whimsical. Again, fulfil our wishes to the letter and points will be yours. Simple. There's even a Spot the Ball competition (but we've replaced it with spot the Pac-Man this month). Keray-zee…

ROGUE SQUADRON III: REBEL STRIKE





ESCAPE FROM YAVIN

WE WANT Fastest time for Revenge of the Empire
THE LAW 120 kills minimum.
TO QUALIFY 10:00
EVIDENCE Video footage of yourself finishing the level.
POINTS 20

1	???	Your name here, Next month!
2	???	Your name here, Next month!
3	???	Your name here, Next month!
4	???	Your name here, Next month!
5	???	Your name here, Next month!

A-WING EXECUTOR

WE WANT As many kills as you can get on Attack on the Executor.
THE LAW You must get bronze and you have to fly the A-Wing.
TO QUALIFY 80
EVIDENCE Pic of results screen.
POINTS 30

1	93	Steve Brooks, Broughton Astley; Ewan McKenzie, Dumfries
2	92	Tom Holloway, Cowes
3	90	Matthew Pellett, Spalding
4	81	Michael Grey, Exeter
5	80	Rob Jones, Poole

VIRTUAL REALITY YOU!

The old Bill

THIS MONTH HATCH 'EM ALL

Stepping away from your Ninty favourites this month, we want a photo of you dressed as **Billy Hatcher feeding birds in a park.** And that's all you have to do. We'll give you a 'cracking' 70 points for your troubles. All photos must arrive by Thursday 25th March.

SOUL CALIBUR 2





TIME ROTH

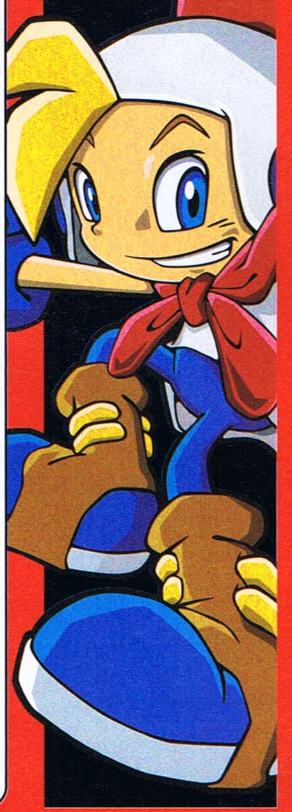
WE WANT Your fastest time for the standard Time Attack.
THE LAW You must use Astaroth, and you're not allowed to play the 'Extra' version of the mode.
TO QUALIFY Five minutes
EVIDENCE A snap of the Time Attack ranking screen.
POINTS 25

1	2'03"92	Bryan Docherty, Gourock
2	2'04"76	Matthew Pellett, Spalding
3	2'08"48	Rex McGee, Trowbridge
4	2'53"94	Rob Jones, Poole
5	2'57"10	Dave Every, Ellesmere Port

JUGGLE MUGGER

WE WANT Score as many juggle hits as possible in Practice mode.
THE LAW Only hits when opponent is in the air count. Last hit must 'ring out' opponent.
TO QUALIFY Seven hits
EVIDENCE Video evidence of the juggle combo in action.
POINTS 35

1	8	Martijn Heule, The Netherlands
2	7	Andrew Grieve, Rotherham
2	7	Rob Jones, Poole
2	7	Peter Bottomley, Cheshire
3	???	Your name here, Next month!



HARVEST MOON SPOT THE DOG

X MARKS THE MUTT

A nice bit of *Harvest Moon: Friends of Mineral Town* for you this month. Above is a shot of the overhead map for Geraint's Farm - complete with nasty, badly maintained veggie patch ("If it's not growing leeks, it's not worth weeding," apparently…). Hidden somewhere on his disgraceful farmland is 'Gosen' the Dog. We want you to find him. Simple as that. Nearest 'X' to Gosen wins the points.

❑ The entry we receive marking the point closest to Spot – erm, Gosen – by the 25th March wins **40 points.**

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO… I'M THE BEST, NGC MAGAZINE, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

I'M THE BEST

The Best just got even Better…

SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE



YOSHI BASHING

WE WANT Your fastest time on Event Match Lv 4, Dino Wrangling.
THE LAW Must use Roy. Yes, Roy. No lives lost either. How d'you fancy some of that, eh?
TO QUALIFY 45 seconds
EVIDENCE We need you to supply video footage of the entire bout, if you'd be so kind.
POINTS 20

1	00.50s	**Ewan McKenzie**, Dumfries **Matthew Pellett**, Spalding
2	00.52s	**Dermot Ryan** Mullingar
3	00.53s	**Rex McGee**, **Chris Fletcher**, **Hollie Eggleton**, **Rob Jones**
4	00.55s	**Peter Bottomley** Cheshire
5	00.60	**Bryan Docherty** Gourock

HAMMER TIME

WE WANT You to get as many KOs as possible in a two-minute melee match. AND NO TWEAKING THE DAMAGE RATIO.
THE LAW Hammers are the only item allowed. V. High appearance. CPU lv1. Play as Kirby vs three Puffs in Eagleland-Onett.
TO QUALIFY 10 KOs
EVIDENCE A video, please.
POINTS 25

1	13	**Matthew Pellett, Jack Rountree, Rex McGee, Rob Jones**
2	12	**Simon Mason**, West Parley **Martijn Heule**, The Netherlands
3	11	**D. Williamson, D. Ryan, S. Limm, C. Fletcher, A. Grieve, H. Eggleton, Z. Moss, R. Woodward, P. Bottomley**
4	10	**E. McKenzie, D. Stroud, T. Pang, A. Saunders, C. Rogers, M. Robinson, I. Steadman**

Bow before your metal superior, fleshlings

DAVID GOSEN'S INHUMAN GAMING EFFICIENCY DIRECTIVE

01010110… Ever watch Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid? No? Well you should. It's particularly good because they both get disassembled at the end… Disassembled fleshlings are the best ones. Anyway. 01001 Here are the month's rules:

TimeSplitters 2, Team DeathMatch, Frantic. Mexican level. Custom Weapons ALL shotgun x 2. Custom bot set ALL Corp Hart. You're on the red team, all the bots are on the Blue team.You always start with a gun. Powerups are off. it's a 20-point match lasting 10 minutes. You have to win by at least four kills.

Send video evidence of the whole match up to the final results screen. I also want to see you choose Frantic, before showing me the deathmatch rules and the custom set up for both Bots and Weapons. You may employ any scummy cheap-ass human tactics you want. You'll need them.

I need your entry in by the 25th of March. Exectute.

F-ZERO GX



COSMO CARNAGE

WE WANT To see your highest possible kill count on the Cosmo Terminal track.
THE LAW You must use the Golden Fox in the Grand Prix on Master difficulty and – get this – *win* as well.
TO QUALIFY 15 kills
EVIDENCE Video only, showing you selecting Master difficulty.
POINTS 35

1	20	**Rex McGee** Trowbridge
2	15	**Dave Every** Ellesmere Port
2	15	**Rob Jones** Poole
2	15	**Ryan Wilkinson** Oxford
3	???	**Your name here** Next month!

AEROPOLIS TIME ATTACK

WE WANT Your fastest race time down Aeropolis: Multiplex.
THE LAW You must use any original vehicle. No custom machines allowed.
TO QUALIFY 2'28"000
EVIDENCE A shot of the Time Attack ranking table. Warning: DO NOT use the time from your records data.
POINTS 30

1	2'01"917	**Matthew Pellett** Spalding
2	2'06"352	**Rex McGee** Trowbridge
3	2'06"849	**Dave Pugh** Saffron Walden
4	2'07"713	**Bryan Docherty** Gourock
5	2'11"752	**Steve Brooks** Broughton Astley

FIFA 2004



GERAINT'S FANTASY

WE WANT You to thrash Cardiff City using Swansea City.
THE LAW No memory cards, and you must use the default settings. That is Geraint's law, see.
TO QUALIFY Five-goal lead
EVIDENCE Video from the no mem card screen to the final result.
POINTS 30

1	6-1	**Nicholas Byrne** Rochdale
2	?-?	**Your name here** Next month!
3	?-?	**Your name here** Next month!
4	?-?	**Your name here** Next month!
5	?-?	**Your name here** Next month!

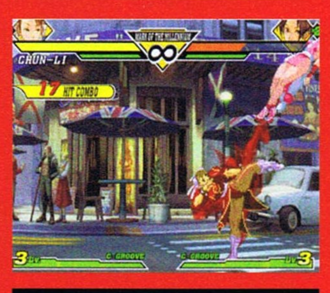
IKARUGA

ROBOT CHALLENGE #3

WE WANT Your highest chain on the third level.
THE LAW Surprisingly, there is no law. Use any difficulty you want. Go on, pick the easiest one…
TO QUALIFY 40
EVIDENCE Video of the end-of-level boss then the final results screen.
POINTS 30

1	131	**Rex McGee** Trowbridge
2	97	**Steve Brooks** Broughton Astley
3	96	**Phil "PH" Hughes** Cheshire
4	66	**Rob Jones** Poole
5	47	**Andrew Grieve** Rotherham

CAPCOM VS SNK



COMBO EXHIBITION

WE WANT Your highest combo using any character.
THE LAW C-Groove, Ratio 4, and AC mode only. Combo can be executed in Training mode.
TO QUALIFY 22-hit combo
EVIDENCE Video of the combo in action.
POINTS 35

1	29	**Andrew Grieve** Rotherham
2	28	**Matthew Pellett** Spalding
3	25	**David Gruber** Norwich
4	23	**Rex McGee** Trowbridge
5	23	**Ryan Wilkinson** Oxford

BURNOUT 2

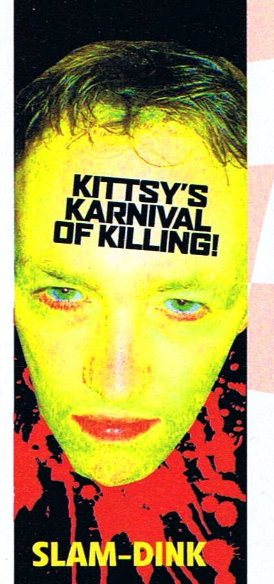


HEART BREAK TRIAL

WE WANT Your best overall time on the Heart Break Hills track.
THE LAW None really; you can use whatever car you want but not the reversed version of the track.
TO QUALIFY 1'43"000
EVIDENCE A picture of the records screen you get after the race.
POINTS 25

1	1'38"866	**Ewan McKenzie** Dumfries
2	1'39"180	**Rex McGee** Trowbridge
3	1'39"616	**Jouni Himanka** Finland
4	1'40"000	**Ole Andreas Utstumo** Norway
5	1'41"433	**David Lent** Leeds

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO… I'M THE BEST, NGC MAGAZINE, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW



SLAM-DINK

It's time to sort out the men from the boys. As adult Link in *Super Smash Bros Melee* we want you too… **fight it out against child Link and two Ganondorfs on the hardest difficulty setting for each opponent in the Hyrule Temple stage. The object of the challenge is to beat child Link by six kills.** Send me your evidence (I need video confirmation of the bout, from character selection to the end) by the 25th March to win **40 points**.

WAVE RACE: BLUE STORM





TIME TRIAL #1

WE WANT Your fastest overall time on the Lost Temple course.
THE LAW The course must be attempted in Expert mode – but you can do it using any character you want.
TO QUALIFY A time of 1'32"000
EVIDENCE A simple snap (film or digital) or video of your records screen, clearly indicating that Expert mode was attempted.
POINTS 25

1	1'28"139	**Rex McGee** Trowbridge
2	1'28"222	**Dave Every** Ellesmere Port
3	1'29"616	**Stephen Cue** Slough
4	1'30"552	**Matthew Pellett** Spalding
5	1'30"936	**Dave Pugh** Saffron Walden

TIME TRIAL #2

WE WANT Your fastest lap time on Aspen Lake.
THE LAW Once again, you need to attempt this challenge on the Expert difficulty setting. You can use any character you want.
TO QUALIFY We need to see a time of 0'24"000
EVIDENCE Send us a video or just a photograph of your records screen.
POINTS 20

1	0'19"901	**Rex McGee** Trowbridge
2	0'19"961	**Dave Pugh** Saffron Walden
3	0'20"780	**Dave Every** Ellesmere Port
4	0'22"175	**David Lent** Leeds
5	0'22"698	**Ewan McKenzie** Dumfries

SSX3



PEAK 2 TRIAL

WE WANT Your Peak 2 Race time.
THE LAW Use Kaori. You can configure her stats any way you wish.
TO QUALIFY 15:00
EVIDENCE Video yourself (well, y'know, what's on the screen, naturally, not *yourself*) selecting Transport from the Pause menu, picking Peak 2 Race, and the run.
POINTS 25

1	12:57	**David Gruber** Norwich
2	13:36	**Karl Frogmore** Leeds
3	13:47	**Toby Everil** Oxford
4	14:23	**Michael Grey** Exeter
5	???	**Your name here** Next month!

SLOPE STYLIN'

WE WANT Your best score for the final heat of the RRB – Slopestyle (Peak 1).
THE LAW Use any character you like – with any stats. Generous, aren't we?
TO QUALIFY 450,000 points
EVIDENCE A simple pic (again, either digital or film) of the final 'Top 5' results screen will do the job nicely. Cheers!
POINTS 35

1	1,187,187	**Adam Cook** Who knows?
2	1,058,117	**Rex McGee** Trowbridge
3	1,034,093	**Dave Pugh** Saffron Walden
4	691,091	**Andrew McGrae** Southport
5	555,986	**Pierre Hyde** Welwyn Garden City

BILLY HATCHER



CHICKEN LICKIN'

WE WANT Your fastest time on the 'Save the Eight Chickens' mission on Pirate Island.
THE LAW Must get an S-Rank.
TO QUALIFY 15 minutes
EVIDENCE Pic of levels record screen.
POINTS 20

1	3:13:29	**Rex McGee** Trowbridge
2	6:47:58	**Chris Fletcher** Stockport
3	7:15:63	**Peter Bottomley** Cheshire
4	7:18:03	**Matthew Pellett** Spalding
5	10:05:05	**Daniel Sneddon** Bingley



SPECIAL RANKING

WE WANT You to achieve as many S-Ranks as you can.
THE LAW None really, just get those S-Ranks.
TO QUALIFY 15
EVIDENCE A video of all your S-Rank records.
POINTS 30

1	56	**Rex McGee**, Trowbridge; **Dave Pugh**, Saffron Walden
2	24	**Daniel Sneddon** Bingley
3	23	**Matthew Pellett** Spalding
4	19	**Rob Jones** Poole
5	15	**Chris Fletcher**, Stockport; **Steve Brooks**, Broughton Astley

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND





GRINDLESS COMBO

WE WANT Your best combo score on any level.
THE LAW You're not allowed to grind at all.
TO QUALIFY 150,000 score
EVIDENCE A short video clip of your best combo from start to finish.
POINTS 25

1	7,190,105	**Michael Robinson** Cumbria
2	1,801,104	**Rex McGee** Trowbridge
3	1,209,380	**Matthew Pellett** Spalding
4	830,678	**Alexander Saunders** Birmingham
5	757,708	**Steve Brooks** Broughton Astley

OLLIE OLLIE OLLIE

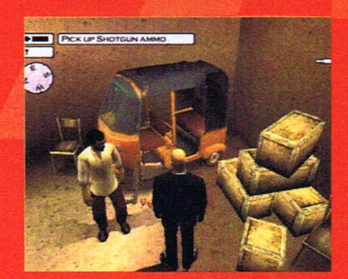
WE WANT Your highest score off three separate tricks busted on on flat ground.
THE LAW No manuals. No grinds.
TO QUALIFY 1,200 points from three tricks.
EVIDENCE Video of all three tricks, please.
POINTS 20

1	37,500	**Matthew Pellett** Spalding
2	29,485	**Tim Osborne** Newcastle Under Lyme
3	18,900	**Rex McGee** Trowbridge
4	10,800	**Michael Robinson** Cumbria
5	5,610	**Steve Brooks** Broughton Astley

I'M THE BEST

The Best just got even Better…

HITMAN 2

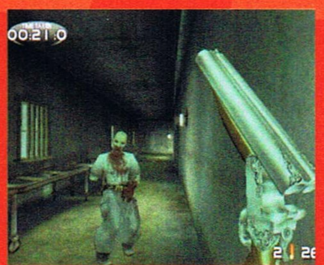


THE HAYAMOTO HIT

WE WANT Your fastest time on the 'Tracking Hayamoto' level.
THE LAW You must achieve a Silent Assassin rating for the level – that means no killing civilians or setting alarms off.
TO QUALIFY 5:00m
EVIDENCE A clear picture of the final status screen will be fine.
POINTS 45

1	3:42	**Matthew Pellett** Spalding
2	3:53	**David Lent**, Leeds **Rob Jones**, Poole
3	3:59	**Chris Fletcher** Stockport
4	4:40	**David Williamson** Bathgate
5	4:43	**Steve McGill** West Lothian

TIMESPLITTERS 2



RHYTHM STICK

WE WANT Your fastest time on 'Hit me baby one morgue time'.
THE LAW There are no laws as such – but it'll certainly help if you finish the level.
TO QUALIFY 2:00
EVIDENCE A picture of the results screen where it's possible to see what the challenge was.
POINTS 25

1	53.1s	**Bryan Docherty** Gourock
2	53.5s	**Phil Hughes** Cheshire
3	53.6s	**Andrew Mills** Dundee
4	53.6s	**Peter Bottomley** Cheshire
5	53.7s	**Matthew Pellett** Spalding



PISTE OFF

WAY OF THE WINTERBORN

He's not only got a stupid name but his default ride's moniker is, to put it in his own words, 'sick'. Although we'd hazard a guess his definition of the word differs to ours. Yup, we're till playing *1080° Avcalanche* and we're still enjoying it a great deal, so we'd like you to join in the party, as it were, by selecting Mr Winterborn and then the Ghetto Yeti, before Time Trialling Aspen Lake Dam's Rotted Ridge (the Expert Track). We want you to collect at least four pieces of coin on your descent, before crossing the finish line in a time faster than 1'10'00. Video evidence from the the character selection screen to the final stats screen. Entries in by the 25th of March please, for 45 points.







ENTRY FORM

FILL IN THE SCORES!

Name ....

....

Address ....

....

....

....

.... Postcode ....

Send to… I'M THE BEST,
NGC Magazine
30 Monmouth Street
Bath, BA1 2BW

If you don't want to cut up your magazine, send a photocopy instead, and continue on another bit of paper if you run out of room. Defaced or illegible papers will be disqualified and burned in the furnaces of Hell, *pour encourager les autres*.

MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!!
- ❑ TOUR DOMINATOR ....
- ❑ HEAVY RIDER ....

SOUL CALIBUR 2
- ❑ TIME ROTH ....
- ❑ JUGGLE MUGGER ....

REBEL STRIKE
- ❑ ESCAPE YAVIN ....
- ❑ EXECUTOR ....

SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE
- ❑ YOSHI BASHING ....
- ❑ HAMMER TIME ....

F-ZERO GX
- ❑ COSMO CARNAGE ....
- ❑ AEROPOLIS TIME ATTACK ....

WAVE RACE: BLUE STORM
- ❑ TIME TRIAL 1 ....
- ❑ TIME TRIAL 2 ....

SSX3
- ❑ PEAK 2 TRIAL ....
- ❑ SLOPE STYLIN' ....

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND
- ❑ GRINDLESS COMBO ....
- ❑ OLLIE OLLIE OLLIE ....

CAPCOM VS NK
- ❑ COMBO EXHIBITION ....

BURNOUT 2
- ❑ HEART BREAK TRIAL ....

HITMAN 2
- ❑ HAYAMOTO HIT ....

TIMESPLITTERS 2
- ❑ RHYTHM STICK ....

FIFA 2004
- ❑ GERAINT'S FANTASY ....

IKARUGA
- ❑ ROBO CHALLENGE ....

BILLY HATCHER
- ❑ CHICKEN LICKIN' ....
- ❑ SPECIAL RANKING ....



THE LEADERBOARD
WHERE ARE YOU NOW?...

1	**Matthew Pellett** Spalding	**2567.02pts**
2	**"T-" Rex McGee** Trowbridge	**2226.01pts**
3	**Steve Brooks** Broughton Astley	**1492.02pts**
4	**Phil "PH" Hughes** Cheshire	**1487.02pts**
5	**Dave Every** Ellesmere Port	**1217.02pts**



6 **Andrew Mills** Dundee	1192.02pts
7 **Rob Jones** Poole	1055pts
8 **Peter Bottomley** Cheshire	985pts
9 **Bryan Docherty** Gourock	950pts
10 **Chris "plasticcoated" Fletcher** Stockport	785pts
11 **Michael Rothwell** Wallasey	761pts
12 **Lewis Voigtländer-Ford** Milton Keynes	750pts
13 **Dermot Ryan** Mullingar	751.01pts
14 **Dave "Sphinx" Pugh** Saffron Walden	701.01pts
15 **Simon Mason** West Parley	691.01pts
16 **Dean Hailstone** Jarrow	562.02pts
17 **Barry Lewis** Dairsie	560pts
18 **Dominic Stroud** Gloucester	545pts
19 **Ewan McKenzie** Dumfries	515pts
20 **Martijn Heule** The Netherlands	485pts
21 **David Lent** Leeds	475pts
22 **Scott Littlewood** Norwich	445pts
23 **David Williamson** Bathgate	440pts
24 **Michael Seaward** Stanley	435pts
25 **Daniel Sneddon** Bingley	381.01pts
26 **Eskil Vestre** Norway	360pts
27 **Andreas Nakkerud** Norway	350pts
28 **Gareth Brownlow** Kilrea	325pts
29 **Andrew McGrae** Southport	320pts
30 **Mr S** Aberdare	315pts
31 **Mark Puddifoot** Swindon	280pts
32 **Toby Lynch** London	260pts
33 **Michael Robinson** Cumbria	246.01pts
34 **Thomas Cox** Birchington, **Steven Limm** Tamworth	240pts
35 **Banjo-Fella, Sam Rogerson** Milton Keynes	235pts
36 **Julia McClay** Langley Middleton, **Jason Leverett** Great Yarmouth	220pts
37 **Harold Rooney-Nugent** London, **David McDonald** Warwick	215pts
38 **James "Yellow Dart" Walker** Worthing	205pts
39 **Andrew Grieve** Rotherham	200pts
40 **Andy Whittle** Leigh	191.01pts
41 **David Gruber** Norwich	200pts
42 **Josh Ryan** Dursley	190pts
43 **Janne Kaitila** Finland, **Paul Gibb** Cheltenham	185pts
44 **Lee Graham** Bristol, **Robert Woodward** The Wirral	180pts
45 **Matthew Woof** Leamington Spa	165pts
46 **Daniel Livings** Watford, **Norman Glover** Cleveland,	160pts
47 **Adam Pollard** Dorset	155pts
48 **Adam Weston** Ballycranbeg	150pts
49 **Angelos Perlegkas** Athens	145pts
50 **Michael Harvey** Ellesmere Port, **Joe Gamble** Ilkley	140pts
51 **Grant David Taylor** Edinburgh, **Michael Daniels** Chatham	135pts
52 **Josh Jones** Barnstaple, **Karl Frogmore** Leeds, **Hollie Eggleton** Trowbridge	130pts
53 **Matthew Bickham** Northwood Hills	125pts
54 **Gordon Yeung** Cardiff	120pts
55 **David Cathrine** Edinburgh, **Zac Moss** Tunbridge Wells	115pts
56 **Oliver Burnham** Liphook, **Toby Everill** Oxford	105pts
57 **Matthew Duffell** Chorley, **Michael Grey** Exeter, **Alasdair Campbell** Elston, **Ole Andreas Utstumo** Norway	100pts

Each month, the totals will be totted up and balances displayed in the Big Table™. The top five spots at the end of the season win goodies – Numero Uno gets not only planet-wide admiration/envy in equal measure, but hard material goods. We keep track of every entrant's scores, so you can boost your points each month and move onto or up the list. Send us your entry today!



PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Use a fast film (200 or 400 ASA).
2. If you're using a digicam then use a slower shutter speed.
3. Turn off the camera's flash (or cover it up) and draw the curtains.

PLEASE NOTE: Any doubts over the legality of your entry will lead to instant disqualification.

VIDEO TAPES

1. Plug the Gamecube TV lead into the Signal In socket of your video.
2. Connect the Signal Out socket on your video to your TV.
3. Find a spare channel on the video and search for the signal.
4. After recording the challenge, rewind the tape. We can't return tapes, sorry.

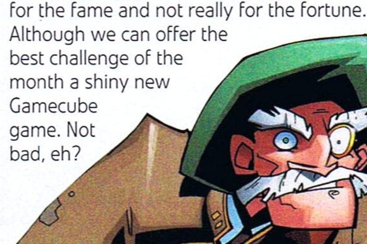
HEY! IT'S THE RETURN OF...

GAME ON!





We've got – get this – our *game on*. It's because we're all about the games – a more hardcore bunch of gamin' guys you'll not find in the entire western hemisphere. Fact, that, and that's a fact. Erm. Anyway, all of that is by way of saying that we play games so much that we're constantly inventing new ways to play 'em – and that's where Game On comes in. Game On is all about extending the life of your games by inventing new challenges, and *we* want *you* to send your own game lifespan-expanding ideas in, just for the fame and not really for the fortune. Although we can offer the best challenge of the month a shiny new Gamecube game. Not bad, eh?



ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER



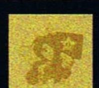




HAMMER DO HURT 'EM

by **Tim Moule, Cambridgeshire**

Curiously enough for a game about little green-clad pixie-men and talking boats, one of the best things about *Wind Waker* is the fighting. It's brilliant. And in honour of this, young Mr Moule has brought us a Game On challenge that concerns itself with nothing more than horrible imp-violence. Go back to the Forsaken Fortress and go to the platform where you fought Phantom Ganon and won the Skull Hammer. Set the hammer to X, Y or Z and run under one of the searchlights. As soon as you hear the Miniblins coming, get a mate to start a one-minute countdown. The challenge is to see how many Miniblins you can kill in 60 seconds using only the Skull Hammer.

MINIBLINS KILLED  **30**  **20**  **10**

ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME



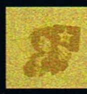




CHICKEN ATTACK SQUAD

by **Thomas Woolnough, Great Yarmouth**

Yet more hot *Legend of Zelda* action for you here, but not from *Wind Waker*. Yes, we know this is an N64 game, but given that you may well own it in Gamecube-ified form it should be simplicity itself to revisit. Anyhow, head over to the wonderfully quaint Kakariko Village and find a Cucco. Hit said Cucco until it retaliates. When the Cucco Attack Squad swoops in to defend the hapless bird, run away (you're not allowed to leave the village or use the hover boots). Now time how long you can survive the vicious attentions of the murderous Gallus Domesticus.

TIME SURVIVED  **2 MINS**  **1 MIN**  **30 SECS**

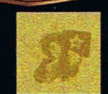
TIMESPLITTERS 2




AMBULANCE MAN

by **Jon Jamieson, Somewhere**

TimeSplitters 2 is the game that keeps on giving. We still haven't finished everything it has to offer, and we still boot it up some lunchtimes for a multiplayer game. For this challenge, you'll need four human-controlled players with the only weapons being crossbows and fire extinguishers. Split into teams of two – one person in each team can only use flaming crossbows and the other must use a fire extinguisher. The one with a flaming crossbow must attack the other person with a crossbow. The two people without crossbows must extinguish their team member when he catches fire. Play for 10 minutes.

KILLS  15  8  5

SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE




SUICIDAL BATTLE

by **Max Elston, Jersey**

You're a loser! That's an insult, right? Except this time it's not, because losing is the key to winning in this challenge. How very zen. What you need is a level nine Link with a level nine handicap. Select Pokémon Stadium and choose Bowser as your character. Poor Bowser – he's only allowed a level one handicap. Set the time limit to two minutes, and the items available to Baseball Bat and Bob-ombs only. **Your task is to lose as few lives as possible in that time, without hurting or attacking Link at any point.** (You may dodge him, however.) So, how many times did you die..?

DEATHS  0    1-2   3

NGC CHALLENGES WANTED

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN…

Have you discovered a weird and wonderful new way to play Nintendo games? Can you sum it all up in about 100 words? If you have a challenge you'd like to share with other NGC readers, then we want to hear about it. Jot down a quick explanation of what you've got to do on a piece of paper, set three suitable levels of achievement for gold, silver and bronze medals, stick it in an envelope, and send it to…

GAME ON, NGC Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Or email ngc@futurenet.co.uk, with Game On as the subject line.

We'll take challenges for absolutely any game on the good ol' 'Cube, but this month we're particularly interested in…


LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING


TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND


METAL ARMS: GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM


BILLY HATCHER AND THE GIANT EGG

THE BEST GET PRINTED RIGHT HERE, AND OUR FAVOURITE CHALLENGE WILL WIN A SHINY NEW GAMECUBE GAME. DEAL?

30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW

MAILBOX

EMAIL US!

Got something to say? Run out of stamps? Guards won't let you near a pen? Then log on to the interweb and 'get' us 'at'…

ngc@futurenet.co.uk

Include your *name and address* so we know who to credit the letter to. You know it makes sense.

STAR LETTER

The winner of the Star Letter receives a bundle of gaming gear courtesy of Joytech, incorporating two Advanced Controllers, a gold-plated RGB Scart cable, an 8Mb memory card and a GC/GBA link cable. Mint!

'My disgust'

I just wanted to register my disgust about the treatment we in the UK have got over the *Zelda* collector's disc. I for one would love to revisit the original games, and when I heard that they would be releasing them on the Stars Catalogue I was over the moon. I'd been saving my stars since I got my Gamecube.

Of course it sold out in minutes. I was a little annoyed but I could accept that I was too slow. On checking the message board I found out that 1,000 were made available to the UK. Reading further there were claims that France still had around 3,000 left. Correct me if I'm wrong but I always thought the UK was the biggest gaming market in Europe…

I waited for a while to see if they would reissue them but every day it still says they are sold out. Looking at the other European sites this morning, *every* other country has some left – some almost 2,000, others a couple of hundred.

David Barber, London

***Nintendo did actually come up with a fairer way to distribute the discs. If you bought* Wind Waker, F-Zero, Mario Kart, 1080°, Mario Party 5, Eternal Darkness *or any two Player's Choice games during January, you could claim a free bonus disc by contacting the Nintendo service centre with proof of purchase. Sadly they didn't tell us about this until it was way too late to inform our readers, and the deadline for claiming your freebie is February 27th, one day after this issue hits the shelves. Better hurry…* Ed**



'Mild swearing'

Have you heard of the latest age-raters, PEGI, who use snazzy symbols to tell you what is going on? I suspect they are not doing their job properly.

12+ ™
www.pegi.info

Consider *Soul Calibur 2*, which contains frequent violence and mild swearing (the only 'bad' word comes from Mitsurugi, and isn't really a swear word anyway). No blood. The weapons used are not real. Rating: 16+, Violence. Isn't 16+ a little too harsh?

Now look at *Worms 3D*. Also contains frequent violence and mild swearing. This game contains weapons associated with war and terrorism. No blood, but the game embodies war. Even the slogan ('start a war for the fun of it') says so. Rating: 3+, no violence.

Isn't this a little unfair? Just because a game has cute little animals, its rating is brought down. *Conker's Bad Fur Day* proved that cuteness does not represent content, and *Worms* is more violent than *Soul Calibur 2*. What justifies the 3+ rating?

Alex Harby, England

***The PEGI ratings are voluntary – the games publisher fills in a form and ticks which age rating they want to go for. You could argue that both* Worms *and* Soul Calibur *deserve a different rating, but* Soul Calibur, *in which the aim is to stab realistic human characters, is a more controversial sort of game. Its forefather* Soul Blade *was censored on PSone, to remove the nunchaku weapon, and Namco obviously didn't want to get in any more trouble by recommending it to young children. The bottom line is Namco chose the 16+ rating, not PEGI.* Ed**

'Approved the quality'

Original Nintendo Seal of Quality ™

Every game for a Nintendo console has a 'Seal of Quality' which, if you read the instruction booklet, means Nintendo has 'approved the quality' of the product. Surely this means we're assured maximum enjoyment out of the game. The Seal is worthwhile on games such as *F-Zero*, *Double Dash* or *Zelda*. But even piles of crud such as *Beyblade* or *Spongebob* get the Seal.

If Nintendo approves a game, the game should rate (by your magazine's standards) at least 80% or so. I have always relied on Nintendo for quality but if I'm just getting a let down I'd rather have fewer titles for the Gamecube than more disappointments.

Jack Ferguson, Northern Island

***Ah yes, the old Seal of 'Quality'. If you read the small print, all it guarantees is that the game you're buying is compatible with your console and won't explode when you switch it on, spitting blobs of molten plastic into your face like pirate games do. It's good to know somebody is looking out for us, isn't it?* Ed**



△ Playing against somebody who knows all the moves? Just bash the buttons and you'll be fine.

'Jeering and taunting'

Re Shaun Stringer's letter in issue 89, about experts being beaten by novices in *Soul Calibur 2*. It's true, I beat my friend at the game and I had never played it before. But you, on the other hand, plain suck. I think the editor's comment was harsh. Harsh but fair. Cue jeering and taunting…

I would like to end with the following statement: 'WWWWWWAAAAAYYYY'.

Aamir Ilyas, via email

***Well, thanks for that.* Ed**

'Killing done'

Many aspects of warfare such as strategy, stealth, vehicles, and all-out shooting, can translate wonderfully to a computer-generated world.

I have always considered it immoral, however, to base computer games on real-life conflicts. Take *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun*, for instance, and turn

Bonus Letters

Killing people is a limited source of entertainment that can be only (legally) enjoyed by people over 18.
Daniel Robinson, via email
***So I've heard.* Ed**

You are cold, stone hearted and deadly serious.
Jack Clarkson, via email
***Thank you.* Ed**

I'm swearing at the telly and almost going into a spasm.
Lewis Harvey, via email
***Careful now.* Ed**

In truth this is just mostly water.
Tom Reid, Swansea
***So it is.* Ed**

Adults will still feel the need to hunt.
Andrew James, Dunstable
***Tell me about it.* Ed**

Of course, the even bigger up side is that you get to see the look on Geraint's face when all his times get wiped out.
Ben Bryce, via email
***Priceless!* Ed**



HONOURABLE MENTIONS

Thanks to everyone who wrote in this month, including (but not limited to): Rory Gale, via email; Rory Glynn, Dublin; Richard Hall, via email; Robert Woodward, Wirral; Ajay Johal, via email; Ross Rankin, St Neots; Matthew Duffell, Chorley; Chris Burt, Blackburn; Amir Mehta, Wellington NZ; Richard Townrow, via email; Thomas Kirkeberg, Norway; Joachim Johnsen, Norway; Matthew Byrom, Darwen; David Morris, Wallasey; Alan Perry, Belfast; Slavoljub Komljenovic, Norwich; Harry Petrie, Nottingham; John Marr, Doncaster; Felix Cox, Brighton; Rob Young, Stockport; Michelle Stevens, Wolverhampton; Alexey Underwood, London; Kieran Simpson, Lancs; Robert Allison,

the premise on its head. Imagine that it was a game where you assumed the role of a Japanese soldier, a game that opens up with you bombing and machine-gunning Pearl Harbour. There would be an outcry, and rightly so.

So why is it that the bloodshed by the Allies is acceptable to emulate, and the killing done by the Axis is not? Simple: we won. You're only guilty of war crimes if you lost.

There are a few games that give you the chance to play on the side of, say, the Germans, but without giving you the option of playing as an American or Brit as well? No way. Now call me whatever names you like, but I'll stick with *Metal Arms* for my action war game.

Luke Kemp, Corsham

***Wargaming has long been the genre taste forgot. It's only a matter of time before somebody makes* SAS: Operation Belfast *or* Mossad Super Sniper. *Maybe for the next* MoH *game EA should give all the cannon-fodder the names and faces of real war victims, and open with an exciting scene where you're flying a bomber over Dresden or Tokyo.* Ed**

'Internal clock'

I really don't think that the internal clock feature of most games consoles is exploited well enough. Yes, we can have day/night cycles or whatever, but why don't software developers try to prolong the longevity of their games by 'time-locking' certain elements?

Imagine if, a full six months or so after you'd completed a *Legend of Zelda* game the GC's internal clock instigated a new scenario for players to enjoy. For instance, new characters could suddenly appear in the game's villages and direct Link on a new, exciting sub-quest involving previously inaccessible areas of the game being opened up, perhaps by Link being able to acquire a new item. This could prolong the long-term sales of companies' Triple-A titles, keeping people talking about and buying the games long after they had hit the shelves.

David Gillespie, London

***That's a great idea, and some arcade beat-'em-ups include characters that only become available after a certain time. But as somebody who has shamefully messed with the Gamecube's clock to sneak a look at special events in* Animal Crossing, *I'm not sure it's workable on current consoles. You'd need to be sure that every machine was set to the same tamper-proof date and time.* Ed**

Bonus Letters

I've been looking at my bedroom wall for a long time.
Jon Staddon, via email
***Snap out of it.* Ed**

I'm talking about James McCloud who, ironically, has the same name as the great Fox McCloud's father.
Olly Parry-Jones, Bristol
***Like rain on your wedding day, that isn't actually 'ironic' you know.* Ed**

Pokémon has been rubbish so far. All it's been is turn-based rubbish.
Morgan Kemeys, via email
***Damn those turn-based RPGs.* Ed**

Considering the anticipation of the new mini series they have just made for the Sci-Fi channel this is a must-have title for the Gamecube, even if it's crap.
Malcolm Nickless, via email
***Yes, more crap games please.* Ed**

Anyone who needs such information can find it easily on the internet, or by standing in the newsagent and reading a dedicated cheat book.
Calum Stevenson, Stoneyburn
***I'm appalled.* Ed**

I know this letters is pointless, but maybe it is of some use to you.
Chris Adams, via email
***Letters am good.* Ed**

'Casual gamer'

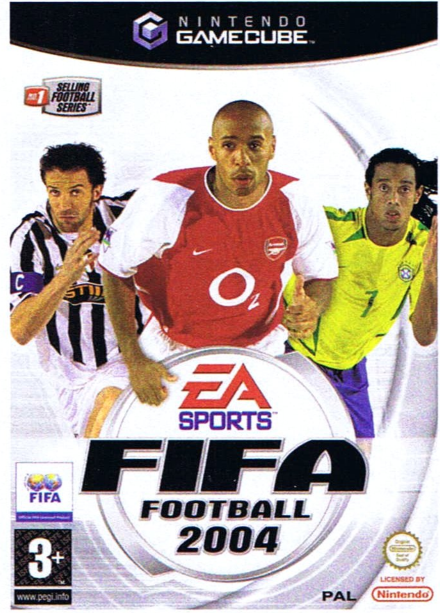
I have recently realised that a new species has been wandering among us. It is the 'casual gamer' and its existence seems to be causing serious side effects. These people buy games that instantly appeal to them, games with licenses, fancy graphics and good marketing strategies.

I am not suggesting that these people are deliberately encouraging developers to spend more time studying a game's market appeal than making it playable. But walk into an average game store anywhere in the country, ask which console you should buy, and you will leave owning a PS2 or even an Xbox.

I was actually in a shop recently and overheard a casual gamer asking what racing game he should buy (answer: 'Well, *Crash Nitro Kart* is proving popular…') I was shocked that he had blatantly ignored the people queuing with red *Mario Kart* boxes. Normally I would just ignore such things but the fact remains that these are the people who will eventually kill Nintendo unless something drastic happens.

Samuel Dowling, Nottingham

***Consider this: too many of Nintendo's hardcore fans spend their time complaining about* Wind Waker*'s cel-shading or* Mario Kart: Double Dash!! *being 'not a proper racing game'. The whinging – from people who ought to know better – filters down to the casual gamers, and before you know it dozy shop assistants won't recommend buying a Gamecube to anyone over the age of ten.* Ed**



△ The ultimate 'casual gamer' title. It sells millions based on the official licence, and plays great too.



△ Even monkeys enjoy drumming. It's the most accessible, inclusive game we've ever played.

'Born platformers'

I would just like to express how truly disgusted I am with Nintendo's decision to turn *Donkey Kong* into a drumming game or some such crap. The Kongs were born platformers. They should die that way as well and not be remembered as some hit-or-miss project

David Kelly, Dublin

***You may be the only person in the world able to play* Donkey Konga *without giggling like a tickled baby. It's a hit-hit-hit!* Ed**

'Hit a plateau'

I own a Gamecube and a fair selection of games. I rate *Metroid Prime* as the most innovative game to grace the console yet. The problem is that I'm

CORRECTION CORNER



In *The Sims Bustin' Out* review it says 'You can brag about money, tell lies and slmack them in the face.' Is 'slmack' a new word not yet discovered or is the **NGC** team slmacking in the Spelling Department?

Chris Jemma, via email

***Pure Geraint, that one. He claims it's a cross between a slap and a smack, which is exactly what he's going to receive when I get my hands on him. Slmack!* Ed**

Underneath issue 89's Correction Corner it says 'Christmas 2003' instead of 'January 2004'. I reckon Paul did it out of revenge.

Richard Freeman, Ripley

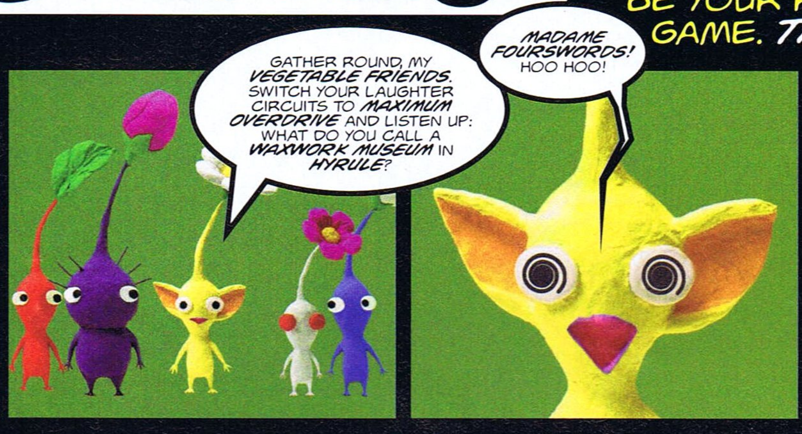
***I had my suspicions. Now this is the proof I need to get his hippy ass fired and sent to the poorhouse.* Ed**

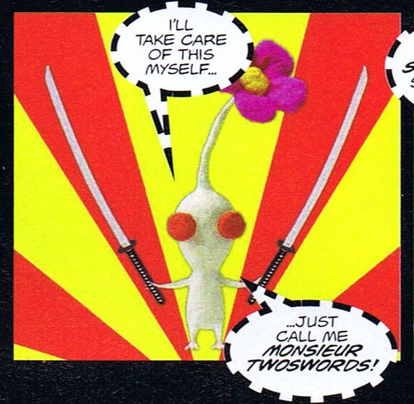
Inverness; Helen Flavell, Exeter; Sean Towey, Manchester; Lee Machin, Manchester; Robert Cox, London; F Hyslop, via email; Dorset Pervert (what happened to episode 2?); Ross Parry, Middlesbrough; Sam Whiteley, Huddersfield; James Murphy, Scotland; Lucas Saunal, Abingdon; Sam Watson, via email; Jack Razzak, Guernsey; Pete Millwood, via email; John Turner, Bishop's Stortford; Simon Mason, West Parley; Patrick Salazar, Cirencester; Sam Ely, Weybridge; Emily Simpson, Netherlands; Thomas Pryde, Guisbrough; Matthew McGregor, Feith Hill; Sergio Cortes, Whitton; James Launder, New York; Adam Lees, Sanderstead; Matt Thomas, Barry; Manjiki; and, as ever, too many others to mention. Your letters and emails are most appreciated.

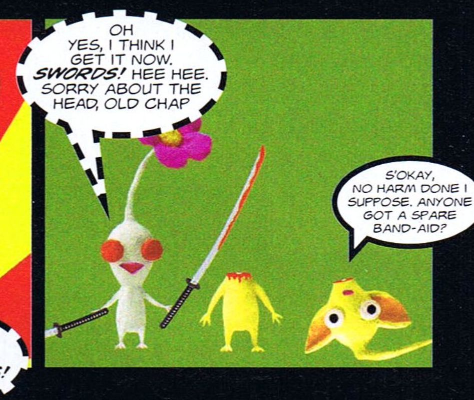
"I am having great difficulty getting excited"

Grintendo!

GOT A NINTENDO-RELATED JOKE TO TELL US? GREAT! SEND IT IN, BUT IF MR WHITE DOESN'T LIKE IT HE'LL TAKE OUT HIS ANGER ON POOR YELLOW, AND IT'LL ALL BE YOUR FAULT. MAKE HIM LAUGH AND YOU WIN A GAME. ***THIS MONTH:*** 'JOKE' BY LUKE PIERCE.







finding that I have a growing selection of games that I play through to the end and never play them again.

As I look through the 12 or so best games the console has to offer, I flick past games like *Wind Waker*, *Luigi's Mansion*, *Hitman 2* and *Resident Evil* without even a flicker of excitement. I completed *XIII* and thought 'that was all right', then put it with the others that I will likely never play again.

The only game I play now out of all my games is *Mario Kart*. Looking at the line up of future releases on all formats, I am having great difficulty getting excited about anything to come, and it's really starting to depress me.

Was it Shigsy who asked 'Where's the fun in realism?' Now I understand exactly what he was saying. Is this the end of all gaming greatness forever? Have game developers hit a plateau just like today's manufactured pop music?

Stuart Masterton, Milton Keynes

Lack of replay value is one reason there's such a thriving market in second-hand games. Trade in some of your titles for the ones you might have missed. I'm not sure why you mentioned **Hitman 2** ***though, as it's arguably the most replayable game available at the moment.*** **Ed**

'Get hardware'

Is it just me, or do game stores in Ireland seem ridiculously understocked? Unless you have access to the internet it is nigh on impossible to get any official Nintendo merchandise. There's no way in hell that I'm going to buy an unofficial controller. The N64 was starved of games but I always could get hardware, from rumble paks to transfer paks. Is it the same over there in the UK?

Cahal Boyd, County Antrim

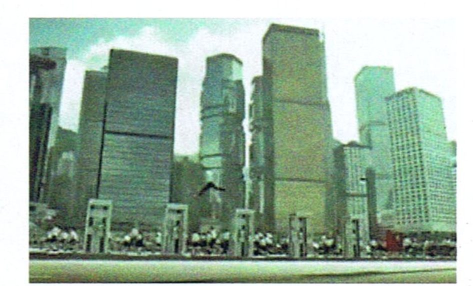
A spare controller is the one thing that's easy to find here. The item we're really short of is the broadband adaptor, which I haven't seen in any shops since **PSO** ***was released.*** **Ed**

'Some slack'

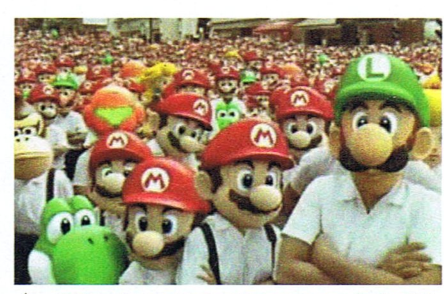
Did anyone care to notice that Nintendo's advertising campaigns are not the worst around? Cut them some slack please – at least their adverts don't allude to gang beatings, sexual abuse and lack of bladder control like Nokia's sad attempt at marketing the N-Gage. Every person I met said that the adverts implied disgusting things and that they were put-off the machine because of it. Nintendo may be bad but at least they aren't nuts.

Melvin McCarthy, Co. Durham

Judging by the N-Gage's minuscule sales figures, there must be something putting people off buying the machine. The ad campaign is one suspect, plus there's the vertical screen, the stupid layout, the fiddly keypad, the puny battery life… **Ed**



△ We didn't want to reprint the N-Gage ads here, so check out Nintendo's lesson on how it's done…



△ …But we haven't seen this one shown in the UK. You'll have to seek it out on the internet, sadly.

SO TELL ME THIS...

Reader got question? Brain know answer!

1. Did Sin & Punishment ever come out over on these shores?
2. When will Mario Tennis be out over here?
Steve Peacock, via email

1. No, Treasure's brilliant N64 shooter was only ever released in Japan.
2. In the summer, hopefully.

1. Why haven't you reviewed games like Outlaw Golf *and* Darkened Skye*?*
2. What happened to Galleon*?*
3. Can you play FFCC with just two GBAs?
Topi Väisänen, Finland

1. We wanted to, but the company that publishes them wouldn't respond to our repeated requests for review copies. Make of that what you will.
2. Last we heard, SCi was going to release the troubled platformer in February for the Xbox only.
3. Yes, in two-player mode.

1. Where did Shigsy get the name Nintendo?
2. What's the next big Ninty release?
3. Why oh why won't they release Animal Crossing *over here?*
4. How good is Mario and Luigi*?*
5. What do you prefer, F-Zero *or* Mario Kart*?*
Scott Reid, via email

1. Since Nintendo was founded in 1889, some 63 years before Shigsy was born, he probably didn't have all that much to do with choosing the name.
2. Starfox 2 is the one we're all waiting for.
3. At the time of writing it seems there's a possibility the game will be released here after all. But since it's so old we'd prefer to wait for a UK version of Animal Crossing 2.
4. 94% good, according to Geraint's review.
5. Mario Kart is the one we all play in our spare time.

Will an English Pokémon Colosseum *be able to link up with an American* Pokémon Ruby*?*
Sam Gordon, via email

We haven't had a chance to test that yet. Given that different region versions of previous Pokémon games couldn't be linked up, the answer is probably not.

With you constantly picking at Rachel Ryan's original pink GBA, can you tell me why they are so damn rare now? I got mine the day the GBA came out over here, but why have they gone missing from shops? Just something that's been bugging me for some time now. Please can you shed light on this?
Joanna Witton, Selby

First, pink wasn't the most popular colour; and second, the original GBA has been replaced by the flip-top SP model. Still, there's enough remaining stock of old GBAs to have ensured the machine sold over ten times as many as N-Gage over Christmas.


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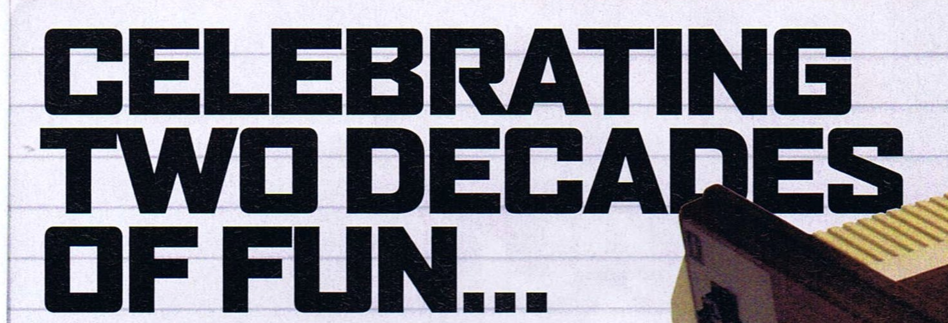
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Famicompendium

Japanese videogames come of age in 2004 – **NGC** goes to Tokyo to check out the Famicom 20th Anniversary Exhibition.



CELEBRATING TWO DECADES OF FUN...

The Event: Level-X Famicom 20th Anniversary Exhibition
The Time: 4th Dec, 2003 – 8th Feb, 2004
The Place: Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography

WELCOME TO Famicom!

When Gamecube's great-grandfather stole the show...



Game consoles certainly existed before the Famicom (NES), most of them in the European and US markets. But in Japan it's considered the genesis of modern console gaming. Released in 1983, it was designed to be an easy-to-use, inexpensive machine for young people. At first, only Nintendo produced games for it, but gradually third parties were allowed in, resulting in many hit titles: shooters like *Xevious*, *Twinbee* and *Gradius*; RPGs like *Final Fantasy* and the king of Japanese RPGs, *Dragon Quest*; action titles like *Mario*, the system's first side-scrolling title; *Zelda*, the game that defined the action/RPG; and many other beloved franchises that became popular – *Metroid*, *Mega Man*, *Castlevania* and more. Famicom was the platform that spawned not just franchises but *entire genres*.

But can videogames really be considered art? While the earliest ones were seen as toys, as technology has developed gaming's gained more recognition as an art form. What's more, videogames have changed the way we enjoy entertainment. The Famicom 20th Anniversary Exhibit at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography shows how true this is. As the exhibition will be closed by the time you read this, we're recreating it for you right here – in real time...

HANDS-ON EXHIBITS

Don't just stand there looking at the games – play them...

When you enter the exhibition hall at the museum, the first thing you see is a gigantic television screen running Namco's *Xevious*, an arcade-to-home port and one of the first Famicom megahits. You're free to walk up to the system running the game and play to your heart's content. You'll hear little apart from the familiar musical ditties and the blips and bloops of the ship as it flies about and shoots things.

Go further into the exhibition and there's a display of all the major (and minor) consoles that have come and gone since the Famicom launched – major machines like the Genesis, SFC, PC Engine, PS, Saturn and Dreamcast, plus lesser ones such as the PC-FX, the 3DO and the Playdia. In the middle of the hall is a circle of televisions running some of Famicom's most famous games – *Gradius*, *Mario 3*, *Zelda*, *Dragon Quest* and *Final Fantasy*, among others. And you can play them. In spite of all the games running at the same time, the hall is quiet and you can only hear the music as you approach the televisions.

Play classic Famicom games from yesteryear.

FAMICOM FACT #1: The first third-party game released for the system was ***Lode Runner***. Hudson Soft went on to release several other popular Famicom titles.



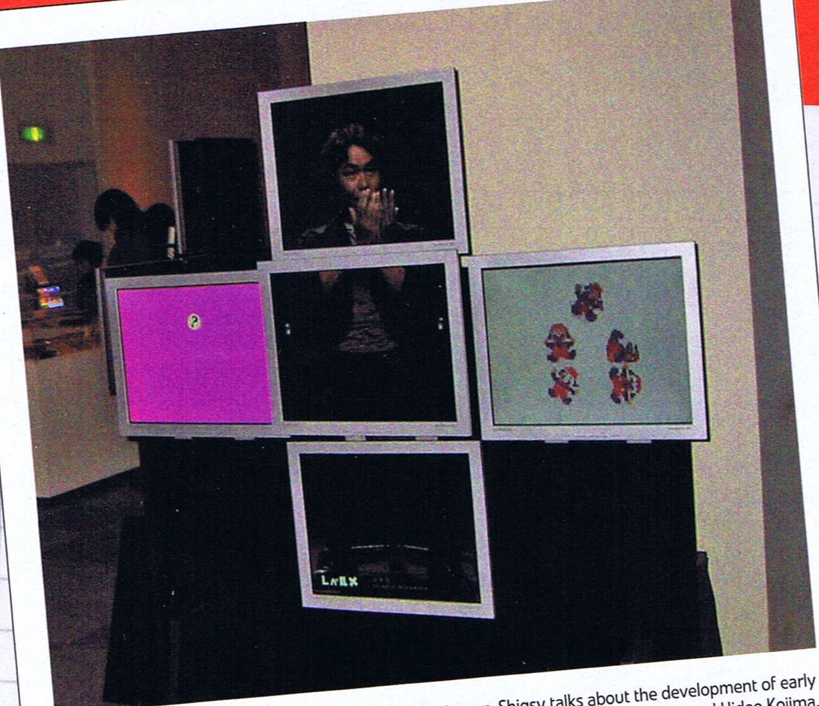
SHRINE TO DESIGN

As close as most of us will ever get to videogame legends...

In a room near the gaming TVs is another series of screens, this time showing interviews with gaming greats who came into their stride in the Famicom era and still remain influential today. People such as Shigesato Itoi, developer of the oddball *Mother* RPG series, which has many devoted fans; Satoshi Tajiri and Ken Sugimori, founders of Game Freak and creators of *Pokémon*; Kouichi Nakamura from Chun Soft, programmers of the original Famicom *Dragon Quest* titles and a company popular in Japan to this day; Yuji Horii, who created the story and world of *Dragon Quest* and is one of the biggest influences on the development of Japanese-style RPG games; Hideo Kojima, Konami's resident genius, who was inspired to make games by Famicom; Yuji Naka, one of Japan's greatest programmers, who developed *Sonic*



Many of the most popular game genres had their first defining moment on Famicom. Look how far they've come since then!


In one of the video interviews with famous game designers, Shigsy talks about the development of early Nintendo games and characters. Other famous virtual faces on show include Yuji Naka and Hideo Kojima.

the Hedgehog for Sega in a desire to make a game that was faster and less linear than *Mario*; and – yes – Shigeru Miyamoto himself, the man whose games and ideas changed and inspired a generation to create games. (See page 30 for our exclusive face-to-face interview with Miyamoto-san.)

FAMICOM FACT #2: In the taped interviews, Miyamoto comments on many of the tricks found in *Super Mario Bros*, like the well-known 'turtle on the stairs' trick that could yield infinite lives. Such things were unintentional bugs, he says, but as designers saw that players enjoyed finding these hidden tricks and techniques, they deliberately started to put them in future games.

RIGHT CASE, RIGHT TIME

The evolution of videogames set out for you…

Along the sides of the main exhibition room are glass cases containing items and sheets of paper that seem unexciting at first glance. Get a bit closer, though, and you see that these are, in fact, rare, valuable artifacts from videogame history, and they form an illustrated timeline of important events in the industry that occurred within the Famicom's lifetime. It begins with the system itself and the first few games – Nintendo efforts such as *Donkey Kong*, *DK Jr*, *Mario Bros* and *Popeye*. Nearby lies the first set of third-party games from Hudson Soft and Namco, who became licensees in 1984, beginning with *Lode Runner* and *Galaxian*. Konami, Taito, Jaleco and Bandai join the party soon afterwards, with Japanese classics such as *Elevator Action*, *Gradius*, *Goonies* and *Ninja Jajamaru*.

Among the items on display are design documents of the very first *Metal Gear* game, stamped and authorised by Hideo Kojima, and pixel-design illustrations for the original *Donkey Kong* featuring Mario and Pauline.

Perhaps the most interesting things are the gaming fanzines written and published by Satoshi Tajiri, who would eventually come to form the company Game Freak. Also on display is the homemade PCB set with Game Freak's first Famicom game, *Quinty*, originally designed on Famicom Basic, tweaked, and burned onto a board for submission to publishing companies. Namco picked up the title, and it sold over 200,000 copies – perhaps a paltry number compared to the millions other games were pushing, but a huge amount for a small start-up group. Sitting next to these is a design proposal, submitted in 1990, for a game idea called *Capsule Monsters* – the game that would eventually turn into *Pokémon*.


See the paper at the bottom of the picture? It's the proposal for the game that became the all-conquering *Pokémon*.

Original *MGS* documents, stamped by Kojima!

FAMICOM FACT #3: The first several years' production runs of the Famicom had a microphone embedded in the second controller. You could use this in games like *The Legend of Zelda* (screaming to scare away a monster) and *Kid Icarus* (fake-crying into the microphone at the shop would get you a discount). These had to be altered for the West.

FAMICOM FACT #4: *Pokémon's* concept sat around for five years before it went into production, and eventually transformed Game Freak from a small game development house to a multimillion-dollar company creating one of gaming's most popular franchises. Who says being a fanboy never gets you anywhere?


Nintendo of Japan repair Famicom Disk System disks free of charge to this day! Now *that's* customer service.

DISKOVER INNOVATIONS

Pushing the boundaries of console hardware…

In 1986, the Famicom Disk System peripheral was released. Nintendo had originally planned to shift all its games from cartridge to disk for several reasons. At the time, the disks were much cheaper and offered more storage space than the cartridges. Also, they were rewritable, which meant that gamers could save their game data on the disk and, when they got tired of a game, they could take the disk to a special kiosk developed by Nintendo and have a new title written upon it for very little money.

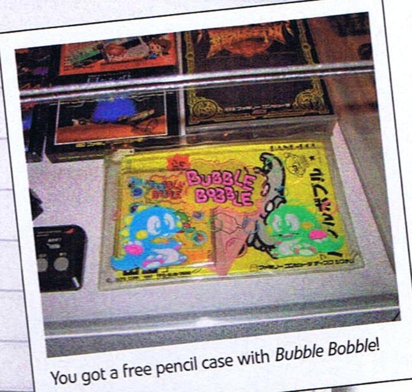
The FDS format eventually declined as cartridge production became cheaper and more advantageous. However, because of the many classic titles on disk, the FDS is still a popular platform among retrogamers. Although the FDS has a notorious problem of having its magnetic data ribbon break after years of wear and tear, Nintendo of Japan still offers a repair service for anyone interested to this day.

FAMICOM FACT #5: Many gamers don't know that their favourite games released on cartridges in the West were originally Disk System exclusives in Japan: games like *Zelda I* and *II*, *Kid Icarus*, *Metroid*, *Bubble Bobble* and *Castlevania*. All of these games had their save data written on the disk rather than using passwords or battery backup.

OUTSIDE THE BOX

The weird and wonderful world of Famicom packaging…

At around the same time as the Famicom Disk System came out, companies began to experiment with different forms of packaging and cases for the disks and cartridges to make their games look more interesting and desirable, or sometimes for purely practical reasons. Unlike other platforms (including its



You got a free pencil case with *Bubble Bobble*!

western counterpart, the NES), Famicom never had standardized packaging or cartridge sizes and shapes. As a result, boxes and game cartridges were released in a wonderful rainbow of colours, shapes and sizes. And it also meant that if a developer needed to put extra chips into a game, it was no problem for them to produce a slightly bigger-than-average cartridge to house them all.

Packaging also changed as developers began to include all sorts of 'omake' ('extras') with their games, again making them more attractive to gamers looking for something to blow their Yen on.

Taito's Disk System game packaging was particularly elaborate, with *Bubble Bobble* and its guidebook coming in a cute transparent pencil case decorated with images of the bubble-blowing dragons and enemies, and *Kikikaikai* (the predecessor to the game known in the west as *Pocky & Rocky*) coming in a gigantic blister pack along with figures of the seven lucky gods. Other companies went a step further – SNK packaged a cassette tape with vocal theme songs in with one of their first major Famicom hits, *Athena*.

FAMICOM FACT #6: One of the rarest Famicom games is a gold cartridge version of *Punch-Out!!* that Nintendo gave away as prizes in a contest. Only a few other gold cartridge titles were produced.



These 3D glasses were intended to make you feel closer to the action. And made you look like a berk.

AND THEN?

What's a console without peripherals, eh?

Famicom boasted a great number of peripherals. There was a tool called Famicom Basic, which (as you might assume) was a tool for making games using the BASIC programming language. You could buy a keyboard and a tape recorder unit upon which to save your masterpieces. The Famicom light gun, released quite early in the system's lifetime with the game *Wild Gunman* (seen recently as a five-second minigame in *Wario Ware*), looks very different from the Zapper we're familiar with – more like an old-style pistol than a futuristic laser gun. Other curiosities abound, including a karaoke and keyboard unit; a boxing game with a giant blow-up punching dummy; Bandai's Datach, which scanned barcodes to create statistics for game characters; Sega Master System-esque 3D glasses; and even controllers for pachinko games to give that realistic gambling feel.



FAMICOM FACT #7: One unit on display is the Famicom modem, designed primarily for older folks to do things like stock trading and bank transactions. Isn't it ironic that even though Nintendo had online services back in 1987, they shun the development of online gameplay today?

Call us odd, but we think this pistol-style peripheral looks cooler than modern laser gun-styled lightguns. Very Dirty Harry.



Without doubt, one of the worst games ever.

Get your lardy kids fit the Famicom way!



Oh dear, the robot. Look away now.

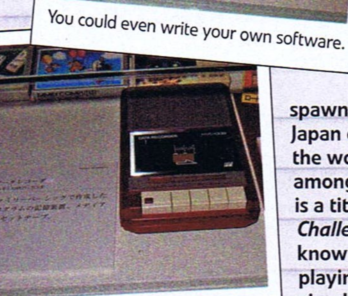
FAMICRUD

Everything's in the exhibition – even the very worst games!

Even some of the more embarassing parts of Famicom's legacy are given their time in the spotlight. Besides rather useless peripherals like the Famicom Robot (aka ROB), many of the most infamously awful titles are given special attention. Games like *Spelunker*, a conversion of an old Broderbund title, well-known in Japan because the hero can die from practically any cause, *including moving. Spelunker* was so well 'loved' among Japanese gamers that it has come to be known as the epitome of 'kusoge' (literally, 'shit game'), and has spawned an entire gaming subculture in Japan devoted to finding and analysing the worst games ever made. Also among the ranks of well-known kusoge is a title called *Beat Takeshi's Ultimate Challenge*, the brainchild of the well-known actor himself. It's obvious upon playing this abomination that the man simply had no clue about game design, as the objectives and goals are so random as to be frustratingly nonsensical: "Put the controller down for an hour", "Sing a song with the microphone in the 2P controller", "Don't hit enemies over 20,000 times or the game will end…"

Surprisingly, it sold quite well (probably thanks to the publicity caused by Takeshi's life-threatening accident days before the title's release), and far more people were subjected to it than rightfully should have been. Taito allegedly received over 400 distressed calls a day pleading for help with the bloody thing…

You could even write your own software.



Ah, we remember the 'joys' of these…

FAMICOM FACT #8: Old-school Japanese gamers consider kusoge as important a part of the Famicom legacy as its more outstanding titles. *Spelunker* placed 13th in the top 30 ranking!

CROSS-CULTURE CLUB

Film fame from videogame talent…

Along with the fascinating artifacts from Famicom's history, the exhibition also displays a collection of cool items that spun off from the videogaming culture of the

Games leaked into mainstream media, inspiring films and, as you can see here, books. Nowadays, of course, games *are* mainstream.

day and show how gaming became an influence on, and eventually part of, mainstream entertainment. One is a short film called Game King, which is perhaps the Japanese equivalent of the West's 1989 videogaming movie, The Wizard (which starred Christian Slater and – *yes!* – Fred Savage). It's only about 15 minutes long, and is mostly a recording of a major game tournament between two extremely skilled competitors, Takahashi and Mori, playing for a high score in Hudson Soft's shooter *Star Soldier* – with eternal fame as the prize. Takahashi, who won the competition, eventually went on to become forever immortalised in the hearts of Japanese gamers as the star of the *Adventure Island* series. There are also other things like game-inspired books and comics on show – but you can't read them, because they're safely locked away in the display cases. Nuts!

New 16-bit machines, such as Sega's Mega Drive, heralded the end of the Famicom era. But the assembly line for Famicom didn't shut down until 20 years after the console's launch, testimony to how many people loved Famicom and kept on playing its games despite the primitive graphics and sound.

FAMICOM FACT #9: **The first two minutes of the film Game King, which showcase the two competitors 'training' for their big match, are worth seeing simply for the sheer daftness of it all. Stare in awe as Mori trains day and night – by building massive card houses. Watch in amazement as Takahashi, with his legendary '16 button presses per second' rapid-fire technique, actually splits a watermelon in half. Priceless.**

GOODBYE, OLD FRIEND

Famicom's gone, but definitely not forgotten...

At the end of the '80s, NEC's PC Engine and Sega's Mega Drive made their debut, rendering the Famicom technically obsolete, but still competitive with the force of a killer games library behind it.

Every empire eventually begins to fall, though, and Famicom was no exception. Nintendo, under competitive pressure, took the jump into the 16-bit age and launched the Super Famicom in 1991. From this point on, game production for the original system waned, slowly at first, but speeding up over time.

By the time you reach the end of the exhibition you've seen over *1,200* games and peripherals produced for the console in Japan. The final official Famicom game, *Adventure Island IV*, hit the shelves in game shops on 6th June 1994. Yet Famicom production continued, as the system found its way into the hands of both new gamers and those who wanted to relive their treasured gaming memories. In 2003, the assembly line was finally shut down, after 20 years. Fittingly, when you walk into a small room at the end of the display, you see film footage of the system's production process – and images of the day upon which the last Famicom was manufactured. It gives a sense of finality to the exhibition.

Leaving the exhibition hall, though, you walk past banks of screens running demos for new Gamecube and GBA titles. And you begin to feel good about life, realising that the end of the Famicom era, the age that sparked the gaming boom in Japan and revived the struggling market in the west, was really a new beginning for home consoles. It led to the 16-bit age, where the many seeds of game ideas and series that had been planted in the Famicom's heyday began to bloom. And from there, gaming has continued to grow and evolve into what it is today. Things may have changed a lot over the past 20 years, but the legacy of Famicom continues...

NGC TOP30

JAPANESE GAMERS' TOP 30 FAMICOM GAMES, AS RECORDED IN A POLL BY THE MUSEUM



	TITLE	PUBLISHER	VOTES
1	Dragon Quest III	Enix	1437
2	Super Mario Brothers	Nintendo	1420
3	Mario Brothers	Nintendo	887
4	The Legend of Zelda	Nintendo	838
5	Dragon Quest	Enix	770
6	Dragon Quest II	Enix	753
7	Final Fantasy III	Square	614
8	Dragon Quest IV	Enix	604
9	Xevious	Namco	590
10	Ice Climber	Nintendo	543
11	Balloon Fight	Nintendo	461
12	Super Mario Brothers 3	Nintendo	456
13	Spelunker	Irem	449
14	Excitebike	Nintendo	424
15	Spartan X (Kung Fu)	Irem/Nintendo	423
16	Tower of Druaga	Namco	416
17	Twinbee (Stinger)	Konami	378
18	Mother (Earthbound)	Nintendo	369
19	Portopia Renzoku Satsujin Jiken	Enix	354
20	Super Mario Bros 2 (FDS version)	Nintendo	347
21	Mappy	Namco	346
22	Lode Runner	Hudson	339
23	The Goonies II	Konami	338
24	Downtown Nekketsu Monogatari (River City Ransom)	Technos Japan	327
25	Bomberman	Hudson	313
26	Milon's Secret Castle	Hudson	305
27	Gradius	Konami	299
28	Gall Force (Famicom Disk Version)	Hal Labs	294
29	Metroid	Nintendo	286
30	Hoshi no Kirby	Nintendo/Hal Labs	281

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NINTYSPONG TALKS TO NINTENDO!

Nintendo: You'll have to wait until E3 for that.

Nintyspong: So, what else can you tell us about the DS?

Nintendo: You'll see it at E3.

Nintyspong: So it'll have wireless connectivity? Cool!

Nintendo: I'm afraid I can't reveal anything until E3.

Nintyspong: I take it that means Square-Enix will be making Mario RPG for it!

Nintendo: Sorry, I really can't talk about it until E3.

Nintyspong: Ahh. Reading between the lines, you mean Mario RPG for a launch game, right?

Nintendo: I didn't say anything of the sort.

Nintyspong: So it's a 3D Mario RPG with wireless connectivity. That's gonna rock, right? You've played it, haven't you? Does it rock?

Nintendo: What the hell are you talking about?

Nintyspong: Who's the best character then - Mario or Luigi? Does Luigi have green fireballs again? Are they in 3D? They're 3D aren't they? So that means the DS has mip-mapping and Dolby Headphone surround!

Nintendo: Sorry. You're not making much sense... oh and you hve a bit of foam, right there (points) at the side of your fat lip... (laughs).

Nintyspong: And Kid Icarus is going to be a launch title? Man, that's gonna own!

Nintendo: I haven't said anything about Kid Icarus, you cretin.

Nintyspong: So it's an N5 launch title then! Isn't it? Isn't it? Isn't it? And Pilotwings! And Zelda VII is gonna have photo-realistic graphics? Man, you just bought us a one-way ticket to Rock City - population Us!

Nintendo: This interview is over.

Nintyspong: Hey, thanks for talking to us dude! You totally RoXoR!

Nintendo: (silence)


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